

UNDERRATED
BAHAMUT
CHRONICLE

最強無敵の 御上機

8

SENRI AKATSUKI
明月千里
ILL・春日步
AYUMI KASUGA

Saijaku Muhai no Bahamut

vol.8

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「ル、ルクスっ……!!?」
「そ、そこはッ!!?」

セリスが動揺しているのか、
困ったように身体を震わせる。



Character



ルクス・アーカディア

滅亡したアーカディア帝国の王子。
『無敗の最弱』と呼ばれる機電使い。



リーズシャルテ・アティスマータ

アティスマータ新王国の王女。朱の戦姫と呼ばれる。
神装機電《ティアマト》の使い手。



フィルフィ・アイングラム

アイングラム財閥の次女。ルクスの幼馴染みで学園長の妹。
神装機電《チューポーン》の使い手。



クルルシファー・エインフォルク

北の大国、ユミル教国からの留学生であるクラスメイト。
神装機電《ファフニール》の使い手。



アイリ・アーカディア

旧帝国の皇族の生き残り。
一年生で、ルクスの実の妹。



セリスティア・ラルグリス

『騎士団』^{シヴァレス} 団長、学園最強の三年生。四大貴族の公爵家令嬢で、神装機電《リンドヴルム》の使い手。



切姫夜架

『帝国の凶刃』と呼ばれた暗殺者の少女。ルクスを主と認め、仕えている。神装機電《夜刀ノ神》の使い手。



フギル・アーカディア

旧アーカディア帝国第一皇子。
《創造主》側の人間として、再びルクスの前に姿を現す。

World

装甲機竜《ドラグライド》

遺跡から発掘された、古代兵器。

その中でも希少種であり、高い性能を持つものは、神装機竜と呼ばれる。

また、装甲機竜の使い手は、機竜使い《ドラグナイト》と呼ばれる。

遺跡《ルイン》

世界に七つ発見された古代遺跡。装甲機竜《ドラグライド》が発掘されたため、国力を左右する重要な存在として、各国間で縄張り争いが起きている。

幻神獣《アビス》

遺跡から現れる謎の幻獣。人類の脅威であり、機竜使いのみが対抗できる。

終焉神獣《ラグナレク》

ひとつの遺跡^{ルイン}に対し一匹のみ存在するという、超常の力を秘めた七匹の幻神獣。

黒き英雄

正体不明の装甲機竜《ドラグライド》を使い、たった1機で帝国の装甲機竜の約1200機を倒したと言われる伝説の英雄。

アティスマータ新王国

リーズシャルテの父であるアティスマータ伯が、アーカディア帝国に対して行ったクーデターによって、五年前に建国された国。

アーカディア旧帝国

世界の五分の一を束ねていた大国。世界最強と謳^{うた}われた、圧倒的な軍事力を背景に圧政を敷いていたが、クーデターによって滅ぼされた。
ルクスとアイリは、この帝国の皇族の生き残り。

七竜騎聖

年々高まる幻神獣の脅威に対抗し、世界協定に加盟した各国から選出された、代表の機竜使いたち。

Prologue – The Past Wish

Part 1

He wondered since when was it.

He wished for someone to look at him.

And then, when he noticed he stopped wishing for it.

The old empire five years ago, when royalty and nobility possessed authority, the tendency of male chauvinism was strong, and a despotic administration was imposed.

Lux who was the youngest brother was the farthest existence from the strife for the imperial succession.

Inside the castle was suffocating where he had to pay attention to the mood and expression of his fellow imperial family.

"—This is the first time we meet since the banquet at the end of the year huh, are you well, Lux?"

However, it was only Fugil who was the eldest brother from different mother who was vaguely out of place amidst that environment. He called out to him friendlily even at the banquet.

His gloomy self who was smeared with distorted elitism.

For such Lux, he thought for the first time that there was someone who seemed able to understand him even for just a little bit.

Part 2

The autumn where the tree leaves were changing color.

At the early morning that wasn't far from the day when the large even called the campus festival would be held.

Lux finished his Drag-Ride independent training in the practice ground inside the Academy site and he took a breather.

"Fuu....."

He had gotten used much to the Academy lifestyle, but when he was training using Drag-Ride alone like this, he suddenly recalled the past matter—the memory of his chores lifestyle during the last five years.

'Why are people become unable to put effort when they are aging?'

Once the boss of a smith where he was helping out at that time told him that inside a bar.

'There is also the simply factor of slacking off, but that ain't all. When people saw their effort bear fruit to a certain degree, it's gonna become harder for them to put in even more effort than that. They won't notice with just their own thought and viewpoint. Even though there won't be any problem if there is just one guy who get it watching over them when they got to be like that.....'

'I see', Lux at that time nodded in agreement.

However currently, he was thinking that he didn't want to be seen by anyone while like this alone he—,

"Now, then....."

He ended his rest before his body could cool down, wore his Drag-Ride once more, and resumed his training.

In the day when there was no practical class, it was Lux's custom to feel his Drag-Ride even if just for a short time.

His body wouldn't forget the control of Drag-Ride, but he would feel like the precision of his technique would fall without doing that.

After finishing the general things, at the end he took a deep breath, then he strongly grasped the Drag-Ride's control stick.

He heaved up the pebbles he gathered into the air, then he released Bahamut's Divine Raiment.

"—Reload on Fire."

Compression strengthening—with this ability, the flow of time was decelerated until a fragment of the normal time, and after that time was super accelerated until several times over. He spread the ability until the range of several ml around him and activated it.

At the same time he also drove his Drag-Ride and used his great sword to lop off the slowly falling pebbles.

His own movement was also decelerated until a fragment of the normal, but the advantage was that he could confirm through his entire surrounding.

It was the application of Divine Raiment to cope with simultaneous attack from multiple directions as well as counterattack.

It wasn't something so great that it could be called as a hidden technique, but it was a battle skill that could become his battle strength proportionate to that.

"Ku.....!"

But, in the middle pain ran through Lux's head, the Reload on Fire was undid and the technique failed.

As expected because it was originally a powerful Divine Raiment, activating it in wide range would put considerable burden to his mind and

body.

Since five years ago he was just a step short of completing it, but it didn't really go well.

'If you are able to grasp one more trick to it, you might be able to complete that technique. For example——'

He remembered receiving that advice at the end from Fugil, his eldest brother who observed this technique.

But, after that his childhood friend Philuffy was captured and the plan of the revolution was hastened, in the end Lux was unable to complete this technique.

He doubted the advice of his brother who betrayed him, wondering that 'it might be a trap'.

Even with the last key in his hand, he kept being unable to open the door and always stopped over there.

However——.

"You are working hard every day aren't you, Lux."

"Eh.....?"

A voice called out to him right after he dispelled his armor. Lux turned around to behind him.

A blonde haired girl wearing costume that was fitting tightly to the body exclusively for use in Drag-Ride—a pilot suit, was staring toward him with a straightforward gaze.

The third year student who was a daughter of a duke who was one of the four great nobles, and the captain of the raid squad Syvalles.

The girl who was serving as the aide of Lux who became Seven Dragon Paladins, Celistia Ralgris.

She had glossy blonde hair that hung down until her waist, and well-featured looks.

Her figure that was clad in aloof elegance was so beautiful it caused him to hold his breath unconsciously.

Furthermore that bulge of her breasts that protruded out noticeably was so big it was disproportional even between that lean and toned body. When it was wrapped in pilot suit it became even more lascivious.

Surely Celis herself wasn't aware of it, but for Lux who was pretty much a healthy boy in his puberty, it caused him to be a bit troubled of where to look.

".....Go, good morning. Celis-senpai."

Lux greeted stiffly toward the older girl who had close relationship with him right now.

Lux became embarrassed that he was so immersed in his training to the degree he didn't notice her existence and how he got fascinated with her appearance just now that he unconsciously averted his eyes.

"I'm sorry that I greeted you late. I've noticed you since some time ago, but I thought that I shouldn't become nuisance to Lux."

Celis communicated using courteous attitude even toward him who was her junior.

Celis also had clumsy and regrettable aspect to her, but as expected Lux thought that she was a splendid senior.

Looking at the sweat on her skin, she must have finished training too.

"I was practicing a combat style that I newly thought of. It made use of basic technique called Break Purge but..... As expected it cannot be completed with ordinary means."

Lux turned his face while making such talk.

"What Lux did just now, was a development of new technique? It looked like a technique to oppose simultaneous long-range attacks from a large number of opponent but——"

As expected from the girl who was famous as the Academy's strongest.

It seemed that she saw through Lux's aim from a glance.

"Yes. I have attempted it since the past, but it's not really going well——, as expected swinging my sword at full strength while also activating Divine Raiment in wide range is causing the output to be completely lacking."

Lux smiled wryly while speaking out his own weak spot.

Then, Celis put her hand on her chin while thinking for a while, before long she lightly clapped her hands *pon*.

"That's right. You are able to execute the technique itself, so how about increasing the precision and durability of your concentration?"

"——Eh?"

Lux was taken by surprise and raised his voice. Celis was nodding with 'uh-huh' in understanding before she took a stance with the Sword Device of Lindwurm that she was carrying.

"I am mainly heightening my concentration with training that has conditions attached. With the method of using a specific gesture as the switch, I pushed aside any idle thoughts and obtained the power to concentrate. I trained so I can do that anytime when I touch the handle of this Sword Device on my waist."

Celis explained about the method that was taught to her from Wade, Lux's grandfather and also her private tutor.

A practice method that doubled as light self suggestion.

When practicing in an environment where she could concentrate, she would touch the handle of her Sword Device beforehand as the initial signal.

By thoroughly imposing that act to become a habit, that act itself would become a switch to perform the conversion of mind so that she could instantly display her maximum strength, something like that.

It seemed that the forms in martial arts and the Passcode to summon Drag-Ride were also a variety of that. Surely the power of concentration that Celis possessed also thanks to that.

"After that, there is the padding of concentration by letting out voice. I don't really use it, but it seems that even the output of muscle can also be increased temporarily by letting out voice you know? If several techniques are combined like that——"

"That's, right. I think I will give it a try later."

Celis was always practicing alone, so perhaps she was happy to be able to talk with Lux because she was strangely talkative with bright expression. Lux thought warmly of such Celis, but on the other hand for some reason he also felt a sense of discomfort.

Celis's advice was accurate, and he thought that she spoke correctly.

In fact if he became able to do just as she said, he might be able to complete the technique just now.

In spite of that, some part inside his mind rejected it.

Even though he thought of it as correct, he didn't want to accept it.

(Just, what am I thinking.....? No, Celis-senpai's advice, if I remember right in the past——)

He had recollection hearing it five years ago.

From the mouth of his brother, Fugil who was watching Lux's training at that time——.

"Oi Lux! Also Celis, here, over here!"

When Lux was falling in thought, a familiar voice came down from above.

The one who appeared was the figure of a girl, clad in huge scarlet Divine Drag-Ride, Tiamat.

The princess of the new kingdom who Lux served as her knight, Lizsharte Atismata.

"Go, good morning, Lisha-sama. Today, you are unusually early aren't—"

It was still around six o'clock of early morning, usually this was a time period where she would be still sleeping at the Drag-Ride's atelier.

Lisha landed down beside Lux and Celis, then she dispelled the armor she was wearing.

It seemed she didn't come for training, she was wearing her uniform with white gown on top of it.

"Fuh, I guess. Even I can at least wake up early sometimes—not that! An emergency contact came for us! It's the war council that we heard from before. It seems that the schedule is changed. It will be held at this Cross Field throughout the morning."

Lux and Celis looked at each other's face seeing Lisha's serious face.

The other day at the royal capital, someone who introduced themselves as the Lord—the ancient imperial family whose existence was described from the ancient document of Ruin appeared.

A meeting to decide countermeasure was planned to be held soon where two of the new kingdom's chief vassal would also participate.

"—Understood. I will immediately change."

Lux told her that and then started running to return toward his room in the dormitory.

"....."

Right after seeing him off, Lisha called out to Celis who was similarly moving toward the waiting room to change.

"However, what were you two doing alone since the morning? I don't think it's possible but, it's not anything indecent right?"

"Wha, what are you saying Lizsharte!? That's disrespectful! I was merely catching sight of Lux's training by chance——"

"I, I see. Then that's fine. It's, that ero woman——Yoruka told me just now though, it looks like recently that Krulcifer is doing suspicious movement see....."

Lisha's cheeks slightly reddened and she muttered while entwining her fingers uneasily.

"What do you mean by suspicious?"

Celis tilted her head in puzzlement. Lisha's face turned even redder and she yelled.

"Tha, that's why you see. That, it looked like when coming back from Ymir Theocracy, she kissed Lux while whispering that she lo, loved him or something, she di, did that as she pleased without even any permission from me——"

"Ki, kiss——is it-!? Lux and Krulcifer were!?"

Celis reacted to that word and even her face instantly blushed.

In respond even Lisha also became even more panicked and flustered after Celis said that loudly.

"Do, don't say it so loudly! Tha, that made even me embarrassed right!?"

After speaking with a troubled look, Lisha crawled her gaze on the practice ground's floor and took a deep breath.

"We, well, this is just something that Yoruka——, that ero woman said though. Ho, however in the end, it looks like Lux doesn't really thing anything about it, he also didn't give back any answer anyway to Krulcifer. I think there is no problem but.....anyway!"

Lisha deliberately let out a loud voice and straightened her back to pull herself together.

And then, she puffed out her breast that was quite large for her petite body and folded her arms and continued speaking with her cheeks still dyed red.

"You too, if you are Lux's aide, pay attention so that Krulcifer won't do anything uncalled-for. Because, that, it will be troubling if she make any strange pass at my knight. It will also adversely affect his duty in the future, besides, even though I'm planning.....to say it to him properly, and yet——-.....no, nothing-!"

At the end, Lisha said such thing with a voice so small it couldn't be made out clearly.

"A, anyway that's all! Then, a horse carriage is waiting outside so hurry!"

"Un, understood! I will also head there immediately....."

Celis responded with a slightly nervous voice and she too returned to the waiting room.

She wiped her skin with a towel, then she noticed the beating of her own heart that was pounding fast like an alarm bell.

"Krulcifer, kissed Lux.....!? Even I, have that kind of knowledge, the act of ascertaining feeling between man and woman but....."

A face that she didn't know, a face that was in a daze as though in fever was reflected on the mirror in front of her.

Celis too had heard some stories many times from her classmates and juniors in the Academy.

The love story of relatives and friends, or the evaluation toward the male instructors.

Because she was misunderstood by her surrounding as man hater for a long time, the girls around her had never made that kind of talk to her, but after

Celis recognized Lux and his enlistment into Syvalles was formally decided, occasionally she would be asked about such topic from the students.

'The first boy that Celis-senpai recognized, as expected it means that you like him right? About him——'

'You said to Lux-kun that you want to be taught various things about boy but, what kind of thing you have him taught you?'

'I'm disappointed. Even though I thought that Celis-san is absolutely a person who like girl——!'

With the last one as exception, since then the people around her would sometimes talk to her about that kind of topic.

Each time she was teased about her relationship with Lux, Celis would say "Tha, that kind of talk is not permitted!" shyly and denied it decisively.

He thought of Lux as likeable as a junior, and she was also relying on him from the bottom of her heart as the first man who became close with her.

She was also healed when he would give her heartfelt consideration toward her who was always strongly disciplining herself as the captain of Syvalles.

Actually she wanted to show him her reliable aspect as the model senior, but when she was together with Lux, she somehow depended on him with honest feeling.

While thinking that it wasn't really praiseworthy, that time was really pleasant for her.

In that kind of meaning, Lux was unmistakably a 'likable man'.

She was also a duke's daughter, so by all rights she was at the age when the talk of marriage would flood in.

The rumor of 'man-hating', and how she was an officer cadet while also possessing strength that would put even male from military to shame.

If only those two factors were nonexistent, her engagement might be decided already since a long time ago.

"Lux as someone of the opposite sex that I like....., is it?"

Celis still wasn't conscious of Lux until that far.

But, hearing that Krulcifer was approaching Lux, the shock that she felt was surprising even to herself.

The young man who broke the shell of herself who was captured by 'rightness' and 'duty'.

Just by imagining Lux having love relationship with someone would cause her to be seized by vague feeling of anxiety and irritation.

"Ju, just what in the world I am thinking——!?"

When she was thinking of Lux while wiping her body, her body was strangely turning hot and a throbbing impulse welled up.

She took a deep breath to calm herself down somehow, but her heart's palpitation wouldn't settle down, and she only leaked out feverish sigh.

"Krulcifer, toward Lux she....."

She became Lux's aide till the end was only to support him who was her junior.

She went to Ymir Theocracy the other day as reinforcement was also like that.

However——was that really all there was to it?

"There is no such thing. Something like me using the position of aide as excuse because I merely want to stay at Lux's side is——"

She thought that.

And yet, she wondered why her feeling wouldn't calm down like this.

"It's unrelated with the matter of Krulcifer. I'm not harboring that kind of wicked feeling toward Lux, that should be true. Isn't that right, Wade-sensei?"

Celis muttered that toward her teacher who had passed away.

Even so her feeling was still somewhat restless while she changed her clothes. She then hurried to head toward the campus gate.

Part 3

A few dozen minutes later after riding the horse carriage.

The conference room of the government office located in the first block of Cross Field. A tense atmosphere was filling it.

Celis's father who was a great feudal lord that was one of the four great nobles—Dist Ralgris.

And then, the young aide who assisted the queen, Prime Minister Nulph.

Lux and Celis were sitting in front of the two chief vassals who represented the new kingdom.

"Then, let's quickly begin the briefing session for this occasion, if it's alright?"

When Nulph began the talk with a serious voice, Lux and Celis both nodded.

Right after they finished the incident in Ymir Theocracy and returned back to the Academy.

A messenger from the new kingdom hurriedly came to Lux and others, sending a letter that told that a chief vassal from the four great nobles would come to talk to them.

The topic was about the countermeasure meeting for the incident that was related to the world's trend.

It was an urgent talk for Lux who was a member of Seven Dragon Paladins.

"Just as you two were told too already. The imperial family members of the ancient era called the 'Lord' whose existences has been hinted for a quite

while from the Ruins. They made their appearance and asked for dialogue with each country."

"....."

Lux's expression tensed hearing that.

Just the other day, the Ruin Gigas that stopped moving in the royal capital started activating, and the Lord that appeared talked to the surrounding.

Glimpses of their existences could be seen from the documents that they had obtained from Ruin until now, and also from the arms dealer Hayes who was secretly maneuvering in various countries, but this was the first time they appeared openly like this.

Thus, the Drag-Knights who represented each country, the Seven Dragon Paladins—and also the representatives from each government that contributed a member to the Seven Dragon Paladins would convene and held dialogue regarding the Lord.

world conference

So to speak, a summit would be held.

"It looks like the other countries are also hurriedly getting ready with their preparation, but even among them we are the one who is especially troubled."

"That's, what does that mean?"

Lux tilted his head questioningly. Prime Minister Nulph lifted his face slightly.

"They designated our new kingdom as the place for the dialogue. Furthermore—it won't be in the royal capital, but in the aforementioned ground that is related with you two."

"Don't tell me——....."

Celis held her breath hearing that, to which her father Dist answered.

"That's how it is. They—the Lords designated the fort city Cross Field as the place of dialogue. It will be in the Academy where you two are attending."

Lux and Celis who heard that were spontaneously turned speechless.

They were shocked that such momentous event would be held in a place that was really close to them.

".....What is the objective of the Lords asking for a dialogue?"

Prime Minister Nulph shook his head toward Celis's question.

"It's unclear at present—but, if for example the clan called the Lord has been awakened since some time ago, for them to engage us in this time could have some kind of important meaning."

"....."

The inside of the room was filled with silence as though in agreement with that thinking.

Lux once tried to change the old empire as a member of the imperial family and he failed, but with Lisha's cooperation, he obtained a new place where he belonged in the Academy.

And then through his relationship with the girls and many incidents, he resolved himself to once more get involved with the new kingdom as a Seven Dragon Paladins and he reached the current point, but he never imagined that he would become greatly involved like this so quickly.

"Then, Lisha-sama who came together with us here is——?"

"She will participate in that conference in the place of her majesty Queen Raffi. Her majesty is talking to her about it in a different room."

In other words, Lisha would be the representative leader from the new kingdom in the summit.

And Lux would participate with Celis as Seven Dragon Paladins.

"However, to make Lisha-sama participate instead of her majesty the queen, then the people of other countries too——"

"Yes, I heard that most likely it will become like that."

From the new kingdom it wouldn't be Queen Raffi, but the princess Lisha who would come as representative. The other countries would also follow the example.

The point was, that was how much each country was fearing the Lords.

Furthermore, there was also threat of the unstable Ruins and the rise of warmonger called Dragon Marauder.

It was great that one of the Dragon Marauder's three bosses, Drakkhen was captured and imprisoned at Cross Field, but it seemed that her interrogation wasn't progressing well.

Even Lux didn't really understand the reason why she wasn't interrogated in the royal capital from the beginning, but there was also the possibility that they were fearing a surprise attack from the Dragon Marauder in the attempt to take her back.

"About the matter of the Dragon Marauder, I think that it might also become a topic in the summit, so perhaps we should at least decide the policy of how to speak about it in the conference arena."

In the summit, how would Lux and Celis give follow-up to Lisha?

When such suggestion was made, Dist suddenly addressed Lux.

"Lux Arcadia. What do you think? Do you think that the aim of Dragon Marauder is only to rebel against the countries?"

"What could you mean, Lord Dist?"

Prime Minister Nulph tilted his head.

Dragon Marauder that illegally snatched treasure from the Ruins and aimed at the important people of many countries was an insurgent mercenary

organization.

They obtained support from nobles and influential people who were left out from the profit that was obtained from Ruins, a group of rebels who was holding grudge against nations with Ruins.

They claimed that at the surface, and the representatives of each country should also be thinking like that but,

"No, I believe they have some kind of clear objective."

Lux said that without hesitating after thinking for a bit.

"Eh.....?"

Lux continued dispassionately without paying any mind to the bewildered reaction of Nulph and Celis.

"I noticed when fighting the group of the division commander Drakkhen. They have clear leadership in their movement, their proficiency as Drag-Knight is also too high. They are at the level that isn't inferior even if compared to the elites of many countries."

"I, is that so? No but, as expected, isn't that impossib——"

Lux wasn't perturbed even by that reaction and calmly agreed.

"Yes—I also think that's not possible, no matter how."

".....Pardon?"

Prime Minister Nulph was taken by surprise at Lux's calm sentence.

Even Celis who was sitting beside him was open mouthed.

"One of Dragon Marauder's three bosses, Drakkhen, her strength is almost equal with Seven Dragon Paladins. Someone that strong shouldn't be left alone by the military of other country and employed with preferential treatment. After all an excellent Drag-Knight is a scarce combat force anywhere."

"Bu, but Lux. If I remember correctly, she hated to be working under noble didn't she?"

"Tha, that's correct, I also heard that in the interrogation she was repeatedly saying that."

Human Dragon division commander Drakkhen received unreasonable treatment from the nobles and threw herself to become mercenary.

Even at the previous fight, she certainly mentioned that, but.

"I think that is her acting."

"Eh.....?"

Celis became even more bewildered hearing the reply that Lux said with serious face.

"In this age, Drag-Knight wouldn't be troubled to find job. Then rather than continuing the mercenary business aimlessly, it's better to join under country with better treatment. Currently Blackend Kingdom's Blue tyrant, Lord Singlen is working under country. The reason is——"

"He know about the standpoint as Drag-Knight, is that it?"

Lux nodded to what Dist Ralgris pointed out.

"No matter how unrivaled they are momentarily, Drag-Ride cannot be used continuously for long. That's why, even if they take over a country using violence, in the end they would soon get assassinated."

No matter how strong, the seat of kingship couldn't be obtained just with that.

It was important to have a lot of comrades and subordinates who could be trusted and obtained an organization that could be trusted by the people and nobles.

The talk that Singlen previously proposed to Lux and others in the shadow.

The establishment of a country that unified the world with Drag-Knight at the center also had that kind of calculation.

"That means——?"

"In the surface, belonging to a country's military is far more safe and profitable than being mercenary. It's unthinkable that woman Drakkhen is unable to do such negotiation with other country."

Lux's words shook the conference room chillingly.

"She refined strategy to such extent, and polished her tactics without sparing any effort, it's impossible for her to be unable to think ahead when deciding such essential action objective.....that is what I think."

".....In other words what does that mean? Those Dragon Marauders, they aren't depending on country because they have some kind of reason that would make them choose to become mercenary or bandit instead? For what?"

Lux took a short breath toward the question of the dubious Nulph.

"I think, that perhaps they have some kind of conviction."

After saying that, Lux muttered as though he was also thinking.

"Even if they ignored the investigation right of Ruins that is formally arranged by countries and become rebel, they are convinced that they will win if they are able to obtain just that one thing. Not just that, it might be something that can even rule over this whole world, hidden inside the Ruin——"

"....."

Everyone in that place fell silent hearing Lux's conjecture.

Before long, Celis beside him gently broke the silence.

"I believe there is possibility of that. But isn't that leap of logic too far? If that's the only basis of that conjecture, speaking of it in the summit will be——"

"No, there is one more basis for it."

But, Dist immediately muttered and denied Celis's statement.

"The group called the Lord, they showed themselves at this time, as though they specifically chose this timing."

"——"

Silent tension ran through inside the conference room once more.

Everyone other than Lux and Dist held their breath in sudden realization.

"You two said that you obtained new information at the Ruin Hall in Ymir Theocracy correct? About that document, you two and princess Lisha have a look first. Of course it's strictly prohibited to reveal its content. Don't speak about it even at the summit."

"Wha.....!? Bu, but, if we don't first have her majesty the queen have a look at it——"

The prime minister Nulph was flustered hearing that.

The record document that Lux obtained with Krulcifer.

It was fine and all to bring back important information regarding how the Ruins and ancient era came to be, but they still hadn't confirmed the content. They needed to hand it over to the higher-ups of the new kingdom and had it processed.

"You go take permission, prime minister-dono. There is not much time until the summit. In the conversation with the Lords, our side also has the need know about the information of Ruins beforehand."

"——U, understood. As soon as it's confirmed, I'll immediately report it to her majesty."

Lux also nodded before Nulph was responding.

If Lux and others could be a step ahead by grasping the information that they obtained thanks to Krulcifer, they would be able to confirm how much the Lords were telling the truth at the summit.

Furthermore it surely would also be useful in grasping their true intention in asking for dialogue and cooperation.

Though most likely it was an exception to make Lux and others review the information without going through the queen first.

"The, then, next about the other topic——"

The briefing session continued under the leadership of Prime Minister Nulph who was still slightly shaken.

An hour later, the meeting was concluded and they broke up.

"Fuu....."

Lux who came out from the conference room sighed lightly.

As expected, he was nervous with this kind of work.

It was especially all the more true when it was himself who stated his opinion concerning politics.

While Lux was thinking of such thing, he suddenly noticed that Celis who came out from the same room was staring fixedly at him.

"What's the matter, Celis-senpai?"

"I was surprised just now. You were really amazing, Lux."

"Eh.....?"

Celis smiled saying that and she expressed her honest admiration.

"To be able to follow that much with the talk in front of father and Prime Minister Nulph——no, it's amazing how you was able to surmise even the objective of Dragon Marauder's action from your fight with them."

"That's not true. It's only that the thing that I was thinking a bit about accidentally came out in the talk."

"But I think that my father is trusting you at the very least. Father entrusting a work to someone is something that happen really rarely."

Lux became slightly embarrassed receiving the compliment from the girl who he respected.

However, there was something that Lux was bothered with during the meeting.

"—Celis-senpai, it's Lord Dist."

".....!?"

Celistia turned around in respond to Lux's voice.

The current head of a great noble house that was one of the four great nobles and her father, Dist Ralgriz was standing nearby.

The tall gentleman was slowly walking toward the two. He was silently sending his gaze toward Lux.

"I was able to hear very interesting talk this time. I will leave the assisting of her highness princess Lizsharte to you. One day I wish to talk personally with you about a different matter."

"Yes."

After Lux replied, Dist nodded silently.

Next, he also turned to face his daughter Celis.

".....-!"

Celis was waiting for his words with a face that was filled with slight tension.

But, his gaze didn't even look at Celis's face. It was merely directed to ahead of the corridor.

"In comparison, it looks like you are somewhat lacking in focus."

It was a voice that sounded strict while there was disappointment mixed in it at the same time.

The moment Celis heard that, her expression stiffened slightly.

"Are you intending to attend the summit in that fickle condition? Then you will be nothing more than our house's shame. There is a need to prepare someone else as replacement——"

"A word please, Lord Dist."

Lux immediately interrupted.

"She is tired from the battle the other day. In order to help me."

The two's gaze met for a short time and silence was created.

But, before long Dist moved his gaze away.

"I see, then that's fine, if my daughter doesn't forget the oath that she swore herself."

"....."

Celis casted her gaze down without being able to say anything toward the leaving Dist.

Lux called out in panic at the figure of Celis that was really unlike herself.

"Please don't worry about it, Celis-senpai."

Lux made a troubled smile and followed up like that.

And then he suddenly asked a question as though recalling something.

"But, is it really okay?"

"Wha, what do you mean?"

Seeing Celis getting flustered at Lux's question, he was convinced.

"N, no that's, somehow Celis-senpai, today your atmosphere is different from usual....."

The girl who was always clad in characteristic air of tension was looking somewhat absentminded right now. Lux couldn't put it into words well, but she felt like that.

"I, I'm all right! Co, come to think of it, is the story that I heard from rumor really true? That's, when you were returning from Ymir, Krulcifer she, ki, kissed you——"

"Eh.....? Just now what——"

"I, it's nothing! I can solve this myself!"

When Lux asked back because he couldn't catch her words well, Celis denied it in great panic and muttered in small voice.

"Haa....., why am I running? Even though I should have become able to rely even at Lux who is a boy but——"

It was fine to speak sharply for once, but Celis's expression immediately darkened heavily and she muttered.

The matter of the past.

She regretted cornering Lux's grandfather who was her teacher, Wade to his death. From that she continued to discipline herself to 'do the right thing'.

In the matter of the campus selection battle, she opened her heart regarding that to the 'male' Lux, and she was able to have everyone knew about her true feeling, and yet.

"I understand. But—if there is something then please talk to me without reservation. I will be happy if there is something where even someone like me can become of help for Celis-senpai."

When Lux told her that with a smile, Celis's face became even redder and she averted her eyes.

".....I, I'm all right! I'm not forcing myself. That's right. I'm recently merely feeling exhausted! I have to retrain myself so that I won't disappoint my father——"

"E, err, please don't overwork yourself too much. After all Celis-senpai's training is already extremely hard even at the normal time."

Celis left in a state of not listening to Lux's voice at all.

(Celis-senpai, really, just what's going on with her.....?)

Lux's gaze was following her back with a touch of worry before he returned to the Academy.

—

"Really, just what am I thinking....."

Night—Celis was taking a deep breath inside her room in the girl dormitory.

It was just as his father Dist said, today she wasn't putting her heart at what she was doing.

For her to be unconsciously watching Lux in fascination at the briefing session for the important summit.

"Something like this is no good. At the very least I have to focus when attending the meeting——"

Even though she was thinking like that, for some reason when she was at Lux's side she became conscious of him.

"Recently, I'm being strange....."

Her face would become hot, and the beating of her heart would pulse quickly.

She couldn't discuss about that mysterious sensation even to Lux who was a 'reliable man'.

After all for some reason that problem occurred only when she was thinking about Lux.

"This is an unknown hardship. Even so, I have to keep move forward——"

She slapped her own face *pan* with both hands and straightened her back.

Then she headed to the practice ground and she began her training.

—

The campus festival that would happen a few days later, and the summit meeting with the Lords.

When they returned to the ordinary days, the curtain of a case that would shake the world was going to open at the same time.

Chapter 1 – Portent of Storm

Part 1

"Theeen, for Lux-chi's return and also the advance celebration for the campus festival, cheeers!"

"Cheeers!"

The yell of the class resounded along with Tillfur's enthusiastic shout. Lively voices echoed inside the dining hall.

After the meeting that was immediately carried out after returning home to new kingdom, the next day—the rest day of the Academy.

The celebration banquet for Lux's safe return from Ymir Theocracy back to the Academy of Cross Field was held during the day.

The dining hall was modified just like the banquet that Lisha once held for him, countless round tables were placed. The party format turned out into buffet party.

Perhaps because Lux was gone from the Academy for essentially more than seven days, not just the female students of the Academy, even the staffs of the Academy seemed to be waiting for Lux's return.

The one who was planning to hurriedly hold this clamor was as expected the members of Triad.

"Welcome home Lux-kun. Is your body okay? Did you feel lonely from being unable to meet me?"

"I got a lot of request letters entrusted to me, so look forward to it 'kay."

"Yes. I apologize for being unable to give follow up for Airi While Lux-san was absent."

First he talked with Sharis, Tillfur, and Noct, the three who he was close with as friend. Next he met the members of raid squad Syvalles and his fellow classmates.

—

"It seemed that you went to Ymir Theocracy but, did you really get engaged!?"

"You were staying at Krulcifer-san's house, don't tell me did you two stay in the same room!?"

"Lux-kun, I heard that you like little girl? In my home I've got a little sister whose age is quite far from me, won't you come?"

—

"Wait, how do you all know even about those things-!?"

.....Strange.

Even though Lux accompanying Krulcifer should be a quite event till the end.

He was jostled by the students like that, but no help was coming.

Was this the scheme of the Triad, or perhaps this was the consensus of opinion of all the girls here?

Lisha, Krulcifer, Philuffy, Celis, Yoruka, these five, it seemed that because of the reason that 'it's unfair that only you all who got to go to Ymir', they were driven out from this banquet.

(Honestly, I don't really get that reasoning though.....)

Even though they were only worrying about Lux and Krulcifer.....was what he thought.

But putting that aside, he was expecting that perhaps he would be able to talk slowly with his little sister Airi after so long, but,

"Nii-san went outside the country while staying quite even to me, your family. Something like the connection of blood is only a transient thing isn't it?"

Saying that, she averted her face aside with resentful glare.

It seemed she couldn't come along to Ymir Theocracy previously, so she had accumulated quite a lot of dissatisfaction.

After he returned home, she didn't really talk to Lux. She was pouting and sulking.

"Haa..... When she is like that, Airi is really difficult."

Lux who was temporarily liberated from the questions of the students for the moment let out a deep sigh on a seat at the corner. Then suddenly a cup was presented to him.

"Here, water. If you drink only alcohol too much, it won't be good for your body."

"Tha, thank you.....wait, Coral!? Why are you here——?"

The one who was sitting beside him without him noticing was a pretty boy with androgynous look and slender body.

The aide of Seven Dragon Paladins of Wanheim Principality.

He was a young Drag-Knight and a distant relative of the princess there.

The young man's expression broke out into a wide smile that looked somewhat lovely in regard to Lux's question.

"Ah, as I thought you remembered right away. Look here, Greifer, I win the bet you know?"

He looked behind him. Over there was the Seven Dragon Paladins of Wanheim Principality, Greifer Nest sipping alcohol with feigned ignorance.

He was a young man with trait of a part of his blonde hair was standing on end and unfriendly sanpaku eyes. (TN: Sanpaku eyes = eyes with visible white between the iris and the lower eyelid)

In a glance his behavior looked slovenly, but unexpectedly he was a particular young man who was good at looking out for others.

He once acted antagonistically toward Lux due to an incident of the past, but after that Lux believed that now their relationship was friendly to a certain degree.Perhaps.

"Haa, who cares about something like that. More importantly, this Academy is really peaceful huh. I cannot see at all how this place is gonna turn into the place for the summit."

"Ahaha. Everyone here still doesn't know about it after all....."

Lux smiled wryly at Greifer's sarcasm.

The other students weren't notified that the Academy was chosen as the place of dialogue with the Lords.

For everyone, this was a time where the few events that would be held in the Academy, the campus festival would soon arrive.

It couldn't be helped that the girls were getting merry.

Or rather, Lux too was honestly looking forward to it.

"Eh, but for Greifer and Coral to come here, that means——"

"Right. Even the remaining Seven Dragon Paladins should be gathering from each country to here before long. Perhaps everyone of the Academy would be surprised because it's still not openly known but——"

"....."

Lux who heard that put his thinking in order once more.

If he remembered correctly, the remaining known Seven Dragon Paladins should be like the following.

"Seven Dragon Paladins represented New Kingdom Atismata, Ymir Theocracy, Wanheim Principality, Blackend Kingdom, Heiburg Republic,

Turkimes Confederation, and Marcafal Kingdom, these seven countries. Nii-san hasn't meet with the representatives from the last three countries."

Airi who arrived without him noticing summarized it like that.

While Lux was surprised, Coral smiled at Airi.

"Thank you Airi-chan, for your explanation."

"It's not a big deal. After all it's something that Coral-san taught me, along with various things while Nii-san was going off somewhere as he pleased."

"A, ahaha....."

Airi spoke that with her usual thorny attitude.

It seemed that Airi was tasked with welcoming the two who came from Wanheim Principality. And from there it appeared that Coral and Airi had gotten along with each other surprisingly well.

Though Lux's feeling was complicated that he himself was being resented.....

"Airi-chan. You must not say such thing even though it's because you felt lonely. Listen to me Lux-kun. While you aren't here, she was always talking about her big brother——"

"Wai-, please stop-.....!?"

Airi who was prickly until now got red faced and she tried to stop Coral in panic.

Coral chuckled in amusement from that.

Somehow Lux felt a bit relieved hearing that.

After that, perhaps being considerate, Coral along with Greifer left from the dining hall and he was finally able to become alone with Airi.

It felt like they were both acting awkward, but their gaze slowly met.

"That's, I'm sorry Airi. I left without saying anything and made you worry."

".....It's not like Nii-san need to apologize. As long as Nii-san is safe, then that's enough for me."

In a glance Airi was giving off an obstinate air, but it appeared she forgave him.

"More importantly, a large event is going on, so let's have a bit of briefing later. Is Nii-san free for tonight?"

"Ah, yeah. Of course."

When Lux nodded vigorously, Airi let out a relieved sigh.

"Then, first Nii-san need to show your face all around the Academy. While Nii-san isn't here, the preparation for the campus festival was also progressing, and it looks like everyone also each want to talk after all——"

"Eh.....?"

While Lux was bewildered, Airi softly pulled on his uniform's sleeve.

When he saw that the party had dissolved before he knew it, it seemed that the Triad had directed the going on about that for him.

Lux was grateful to the three who were casually being considerate to him. He then returned to the girl dormitory to take rest for a moment, then along with Airi he walked inside the Academy's ground.

Part 2

"It's been quite long, I need to do the chores too——"

Airi was exasperated when Lux said that he would do the afternoon work at the very least.

"Nii-san will be laughed at if you said such thing."

He immediately understood the reason while looking around the school building.

In each classroom that was decorated with colorful ornaments, there were unfamiliar signboards set up.

It seemed that each classroom was doing refreshment booth or some kind of performance.

In addition the indoor practice ground was remodeled like a dance hall, red carpet and chandelier were beautifully decorating the place.

At the courtyard, stands were lining up like a fair with students dressed as shop staff. It was unclear how everything was made, but everyone was talking to each other and preparing various merchandises.

"This is amazing....."

Lux himself thought that his line sounded stupid, but he could only be astonished like that.

Different from before his departure to Ymir Theocracy, inside the Academy's ground was vibrantly decorated several times more than usual.

When the female students saw the surprised figure of Lux, they waved their hand in greeting.

—

"Hey hey, which project Lux-kun will participate in?"

"Won't you come to our place, this is our first time doing things like cooking or serving customer!"

"Decided it quickly okay, specialized booth can be made depending on you after all! Imagine, something like a room where you can have Lux-kun whispering sweet nothings to you for three minutes just by paying money——"

—

"Eeerr, what does that mean.....?"

When Lux was bewildered that such voices were calling at him frequently, Airi beside him gave the answer.

"In the campus festival, there is a rule that everyone without exception has to participate in an event or a project. By the way Nii-san haven't decide that, so please choose it within today."

".....I, I see."

By the way, it seemed that Lisha and others had decided what they would participate in since before.

It was only Lux who was practically unknowing about this.

(The festival of the Academy.....is it?)

At the era of old empire, as an imperial family member, he was only watching the country's festival from afar.

In his chore lifestyle that span across five years, there were several times when he helped out with festival's preparation.

But, fundamentally it was only behind the scene work that he was doing in earnest. Getting heated up like this with everyone was something that he had never done.

"How should I participate I wonder....."

He felt somewhat unfamiliar with this, or rather, somehow he was feeling giddy.

While he was thinking so, a familiar voice suddenly called him to stop.

"Oi, Lux! You're going to join my place. Come over here right away!"

The one who waved her hand while speaking loudly was the princess of the new kingdom, Lizsharte.

Her characteristic blonde hair sidetail was swaying, unable to repress her excitement.

So that she wouldn't disturb Lux's time with Airi and Triad, until now she held back herself from calling out to him.

"Haa. Lisha-sama is just like as always."

"Then, how about we listen to her?"

Lux also smiled wryly toward Airi's sigh and then they moved toward Lisha.

Drag-Ride's atelier.

That place which was managed by Lisha who was the chief developer there would be opened to public when it was campus festival.

Lux had entered inside the atelier with relative frequency to check on Lisha's condition, but the interior was completely different from before.

"Uwa....."

A small voice of admiration leaked out from the mouth of Lux who saw it.

Chimeratech Wyvern that combined two types of general purpose Drag-Ride, and a Drag-Ride with armor thickness that was twice the normal.

They were the original Drag-Ride that Lisha independently remodeled and developed.

In addition, there were rare parts that were heavily guarded being displayed.

It was a performance that caused even Lux who had handled Drag-Ride for a long time to be unconsciously watching in fascination.

Surely they didn't simply have functionality, but also had their outer appearance's beauty paid attention to.

"How's that? Quite something aren't they? I haven't shown it to anyone yet, but this is special for you."

Lisha folded her arms while proudly chuckling 'fufuh', emphasizing her largish breasts.

For a moment Lux's heart skipped a beat seeing that cute gesture she was doing without self-awareness—,

"You are filthy, Nii-san."

"-.....!? So, sorry!?"

Lux spontaneously returned to his senses hearing the retort Airi gave him along with a scorning gaze.

"Nn.....? What's up?"

Lux turned back his gaze to Lisha who was cutely tilting her head and he spoke his impression about her work.

"This is amazing. Could it be that Lisha-sama was also working hard until late yesterday was for the sake of this?"

"Fuh, naive. This is only me lining up my results until now. Of course I won't show my real ace in something like a campus festival."

Lisha made a self-assured and cocky smile and proclaimed that.

Even Lux who saw that got swept into her pace and returned a smile.

"I'm looking forward to it, Lisha-sama."

"Ah, right..... The, then if you will also accompany me together in operating the show at the big day——"

"But this, they will get stolen by putting them inside box like this you know?"

"What did you say!?"

When Lux lifted up a display box that was filled with a rare part, Lisha spontaneously raised her voice.

"It's a glass that can be seen through even from outside, but if it's smashed then that's it. It will be troublesome, but I think it will be safer to use box of iron bar for the weapon and have it fixed onto the stand."

"I, is that so.....?"

When Lux did odd job as security, he had experienced the exhibited goods getting stolen several times.

"If I remember right, there was metal fixtures for use of repair in the Drag-Ride hangar, so I'll bring them here. The tools there can also be borrowed, so please wait for a bit."

After saying that, Lux went outside with a little jog.

After that he quickly finished fixing the display and Lisha said thanks to him.

"I've shown you a slightly uncool side of me there. But you saved me."

"Please don't mind it. This kind of thing often happens when you get engrossed into something."

"Is that so. As expected you're my knight huh. Whi, which reminds me, before this, you with Krulcifer....."

"Now then, let's go look around to the next place now, Nii-san."

"Wa, wait! My talk is still—!"

When Lisha tried to follow right behind, she was stopped by Relie coming to the atelier for inspection.

Lux got a bit curious about what she was going to say, but without stopping he visited the other places.

There was a specially set up stage in the courtyard, it seemed that an even would be held there.

The classroom wasn't only used for food stand that mimicked street stall, there were also a lot of places where the students exercised their ingenuity until the interior design.

Next he arrived at the stand where Airi was participating—the museum that was specially set up using the library.

The history from the old empire until it changed into new kingdom.

Simple map and facility of Cross Field. Furthermore the excavated Ruins and Abyss, the data of Drag-Ride. All those were displayed in the way that was easy to understand. Even from Lux's view point it looked interesting.

It seemed that at the appointed day Airi would also serve as librarian who gave guidance and explanation.

"But, it's amazing. Even though here is more or less an academy for military cadet—. Does other place also has this kind of festival?"

"No way they have it."

Airi smilingly asserted without hesitation.

"I too have never attended any other school than here, but according to what I heard from the students around me, it seems this kind of event is rare you know? I believe that surely this is the influence of headmaster's love for festival."

"I see....."

Even Lux was in acceptance with Airi's guess.

There were also times when he was troubled by Relie's playfulness, but he was happy with this kind of event.

Lux who usually was unable to be brazen and participate in festival felt like he could be accepted as a member of these cheerful students in this event.

He could even feel vague exaltation from Airi who was usually playing the act like an Ojou-sama.

The two of them were holding complicated circumstances since their childhood, but only in this time right now they were able to be immersed in feeling of freedom.

"....."

Both of them deviated from the bustling path side by side and headed to an area of trees where there was no sign of people.

Airi's expression changed into a serious one in that timing that accidentally came to them.

"Come to think of it, what happened with the documents that Nii-san and others got hold of?"

Her voice's tone suddenly dropped.

Her way of talking was roundabout, but Lux immediately guessed her intention.

It was about the case the other day, the data related to the Lord and the Ruins that they brought back from Ymir Theocracy's Hall.

Because this time the Automata Ney Louches deciphered the ancient language for them, they were able to grasp the content right away.

"Hm..... I had looked through it with Krulcifer-san and others, and the document had also been sent to the royal capital but——"

"Was there, something?"

Slight nervousness was transmitted from Airi's voice.

Surely she was more bothered about the Lord rather than the matter of Krulcifer who was a Ruin's 'supervisor'.

Silver hair and grey pupil that were the distinctive traits of the old empire's imperial family.

Did Hayes who had those distinctive traits was related somehow? That was the question, but,

"No, currently we still don't know for sure——"

"Is, that so."

Airi sighed looking somewhat relieved.

"But, please be careful. In the summit that will be held soon, that person is likely to also come after all."

"......I know."

Lux intended to respond naturally, but he was aware that his voice was tense.

The imperial princess of the Lord who proposed a talk with every countries, Listelka.

When she declared who would be accompanying her as guard and also aide, the name of that Fugil came out.

Such thing could be predicted from the fact that he was around Hayes since before, but this time he would be confronting Fugil in the same place of conference.

The reason of the betrayal at that day when he resolved to destroy the old empire in the past.

And then, the reason why Fugil was assisting the clan of Lord right now.

While the two of them were thinking about those matters—, a loud voice and footsteps came to be heard.

"Someone—!? Catch that girllllllll!?"

"—!?"

A group of students were running noisily.

Ahead of them, was a girl wearing showy red mantel running.

She was a petite girl with distinctive hairstyle of orange hair tied into the shape of ring, but her feet were strangely fast, no one could catch up to her.

"That's—, a girl coming from outside to observe?"

She didn't look like a student of the Academy, on the other hand it was also hard to imagine a girl trespasser.

But, why was she being chased by students?

While Lux was perplexed, the girl who was running fast opened her mouth with a fed up look.

"Aah geez, how troubling. Even though I only knocked down a bit something that came falling—, the lot here is too sensitive with trivial thing."

The girl looked around restlessly while running further to shake off her pursuers.

But, the three members of Tria suddenly blocked the girl's path.

"Please stop the girl over there! You are already surrounded! By this Academy's well-known vigilance committee, the Triads!"

The leader Sharis stood in the way of the girl and introduced themselves.

Calling themselves as well-known was somewhat doubtful, but it somehow it looked like she was having fun.

"Yep yeeep. If you don't stop right away, later you will be sentenced with tickling punishment you knooow."

"Yes. These two are like this, but they are serious so surrender immediately."

In addition Tillfur and Noct pressed from two other directions, surrounding the girl. The girl in mantle sighed.

"Oh dear. Even though I shouldn't raise my hand toward students."

"Resign yourself and—uwah!?"

"Hiah!?"

".....-!?"

But, that moment when the Triad grabbed at the girl, suddenly the three's body floated in the air and they were flipped down on the lawn lightly.

Rather than saying that the girls were sent flying, it only looked like their body was merely twisted a bit.

And yet suddenly the three were knocked down with a movement that was like magic.

"Everyone!? Are you all right—wait, uwah!?"

Lux immediately called out in worry about the three's well being, but the Triad members who were flipped over had their skirt lifted. Lux averted his gaze in panic.

"Fuh, you all are still lacking in training."

The escapee used that opening to run away in the blink of eye.

Even Lux and Airi were taken aback seeing the Triads were instantly defeated.

"That girl, who in the world——?"

"Yeah. Her appearance is like a normal child, but she isn't an ordinary person."

A body movement that was like a master controlling the opponent's motion with the slightest movement.

It felt like Lux had seen something similar from somewhere, but he couldn't remember.

"Lux-kun! Please take care of the rest!"

"Can't go one anymoreee, I'm tireeed."

Sharis and Tillfur immediately stood up, but they asked for help like that.

"Err, but without using Drag-Ride, it feels like I also won't be able to catch her though....."

After Lux smiled wryly, Noct who stood up the last muttered calmly with reproachful eyes and blushing cheeks.

"No. About the case of casually watching the panties of us three, if it's now we will give forgiveness but——"

"Sorry! I'll go catch that girl somehow!"

Airi reacted to what Noct pointed out and her gaze turned cold.

As though escaping from there, Lux started running in pursuit of the escaping girl.

Although he had said that, he was already losing sight of that small back.

But, thinking that he had to at least give it a try, Lux went toward the back of the campus building. There his collar was suddenly caught from behind.

".....-!?"

He let his guard down for an instant—no, he should be on guard already, but he was still easily caught.

However, before Lux could turn around, he heard a voice from behind.

"Oi, you. My bad but can you hide me for a bit? A frightening fellow has been aiming at me since some time ago....."

Lux immediately noticed the reason why the voice sounded somewhat scared.

When he noticed, before him there was a girl wearing black foreign outfit standing.

"It has been a while Aruji-sama. How are you doing? My apologize for being unable to take part in the banquet just now."

The one who bowed in greeting to him with a smile was the first year student, Kirihome Yoruka.

In the old empire, she was a Drag-Ride who was called as the Empire's Assassin Blade. Right now this assassin girl called herself as Lux's loyal servant.

Glossy black hair and differently colored eyes of blue and violet.

He became somewhat uneasy seeing her smile that was giving off bewitching allure, but his heart was strangely beating hard.

Lux took a deep breath so that the agitation of his heart wouldn't be noticed and he straightened his back.

"Err, did you come here to expressly meet me?"

When Lux asked timidly, Yoruka's expression burst into a bright smile to him.

"Yes, of course—is what I wished could say, but unfortunately that's not it. It appears that I too have to participate in this campus festival something, so I was doing rehearsal."

"By rehearsal you mean.....?"

When he became curious and asked, Yoruka lowered her eyes and nodded,

"Yes. I was entrusted with the performance of 'Knight of Foreign Country' by myself. Actually in my nation of Koto, instead of knight they were called samurai though—"

"I, is that so?"

What's this?

Lux wasn't knowledgeable about the culture of the nation of Koto so he didn't understand what the performance was about, but there was intense smell that Yoruka who had no spirit cooperation at all was being driven off as a troublesome person by other students.

Well, Yoruka herself also didn't have the personality that would be bothered by that though.

"Eh? But if you are doing rehearsal—, are you going to do something like a knight?"

"Yes, just now I was chasing the criminal who broke an implement of the Academy. She is a girl wearing showy red mantle but, does Aruji-sama know anything about it?"

"Err—"

At that instant, the girl who was hiding behind him right now was sending him instruction by tracing letters on his back.

The message was a simple 'Save me'.

""

Honestly, if he was going to capture this girl, then he should present her forward here, but in this situation, he got the feeling that it would be better for him to persuade the girl.

"Tha, that, just now it looked like she went to the other side so——"

"Oh my? Is that so."

Yoruka responded with her usual smile at Lux's lie.

But, the coloring of her violet eye also looked like it was shining slightly.

"Then excuse my leave. Let's meet again later, Aruji-sama."

Yoruka left along with a smile that was filled with affection.

".....Perhaps she noticed just as I thought."

The moment Lux thought that and muttered, the girl she saved also released a relieved sigh.

"Fuu, thanks to you I'm saved. I've got to thank you."

"No, it's fine but——, more importantly what did you do that got you chased?"

Lux faced the girl once more and questioned her.

He thought that she might be a child from her body build, but from the vague adult atmosphere her body was clad in, perhaps her age was fairly higher.

"Right. It's not like I did anything big. Just now there was a stall imitation that did some kind of event, so I tried giving it a try for a bit. But then I mistook the target and an expensive looking vase furnishing got wrecked."

".....I was mistaken I'm sorry I caught the criminal."

With a dry face Lux quietly grabbed the girl's hand. Seeing that the girl with small stature yelled.

"Uwa! Even though the situation finally calmed down! What are you dissatisfied with!? I've said that if it's money I'll pay it later!"

"....."

Well, she might say the truth about paying seeing from her unique getup, but he somehow understood the reason why the students were angry.

"Then, I'll apologize to everyone, so for now let's at least talk to the headmaster——"

After worrying for a bit, Lux gave a suggestion to solve the problem with his way, but the girl in mantle scoffed.

"Headmaster you say? Then you don't need to worry, Relie Aingram is my old acquaintance."

"Eh.....?"

The moment Lux blinked in surprise, the girl quietly moved her hand and caressed Lux's cheek with strange hand manner.

"However, I was negligent and only noticed just now but, you have quite the beautiful look. Your feature is especially child-faced which is my preference, I want to thank you, so won't you tell me your name?"

"E, err, I am Lux Arcadia, but....."

Lux's cheeks reddened in embarrassment having his face suddenly touched.

It appeared that the girl before his eyes was pleased with his reaction, her eyes were sparkling even brighter.

"Oo! So you are the rumored ruined prince! This is....., what convenient chance this is!"

The girl licked her lips *slurp* with a voice that was shrill from excitement.

The moment Lux was stared by those eyes that were lighted with flame of lust, he got some kind of bad premonition.

One of her hands that was wrapped with white glove quietly went around Lux's neck, at the same time her other hand crawled around Lux's chest and abdomen.

"Your appearance is slender, but your body is reasonably tight. This feels like it will be pleasant to be embraced by this body."

The girl was making a wicked smile that looked somewhat flirty.

"Wai-, what are you suddenly—!?"

"You, from your reaction you're inexperienced aren't you? I don't think it's possible but, are you inexperienced with woman even with that face?"

"Wha-.....!?"

Lux's face was getting increasingly red from suddenly asked with strange question.

About his experience, did he have something like that?

If she referred to something further than a kiss, then it was true that he was inexperienced though—.

"My god, to think that a feast this delicious is still lying untouched! If possible I wish to devour you five years later while you are still young but, even you right now is satisfactory. Oi Lux, you—how much it will be to purchase you for one night?"

".....Yes?"

After thinking for a full few seconds, Lux was bewildered because he didn't understand the meaning of her question.

But, the girl was gazing up at Lux's face with a grin that looked vaguely obscene.

"You have a lot of debt remaining correct? Rather how about we skip that directly to you become my lover and move into my house?"

Even Lux finally noticed after getting told that much.

He noticed what this girl with nice getup wanted to buy him for.

"Wait, what are you saying!? There is no way I can do such——"

Lux's cheeks blushed and he refused in panic, but the girl's finger traced Lux's chest with an even more wicked grin.

"Kukukuku..... You, despite your appearance you are skilled at haggling aren't you? I get it. I'll properly look after your little sister too. Don't worry about the matter of the livelihood of you two."

"What are you talking about-!?"

The moment Lux reflexively retorted, his body suddenly floated and he was pulled backward.

".....-!?"

Someone who appeared from behind lightly embraced Lux's body and leaped, taking distance from the girl before their eyes.

There, Lux finally noticed the existence who caused that after getting handled that far.

He noticed the identity of the other girl who cut in between him and the girl and separated the two of them.

"Phi-chan!?"

His childhood friend who possessed hair of cherry blossom color and big breasts, Philuffy Aingram.

From a glance she was a my pace girl who seemed to be expressionless and taciturn, but right now in this moment she moved swiftly and confronted the girl before them.

"Hou..... What a contemptible greeting to perpetrate rudeness to the master you are reunited with. It seems that Relie is pampering her little sister like always."

"Even if it's Master, I won't hand over Lu-chan."

Philuffy quietly took a stance. In respond the girl smiled fearlessly.

"Hohoo, so it's something like that. Now that you mention it, I heard that you've got childhood friend or something huh."

Was the two acquainted with each other?

Faster than Lux could think that, the thinking that he had to stop this emerged in his mind.

In contrast to her appearance, Philuffy was an expert of martial arts with outstanding physical ability, but this girl was also considerably skilled.

Thus, it would become terrible if the two clashed directly.

"Wa, wait you two, I don't know what's going on but sto——"

When Lux who guessed that tried to stop them with his all, the air suddenly relaxed.

"Fu....., it can't be helped. Let's stop the game here. As expected, it will require much effort to take on these two simultaneously."

"Two.....?"

Right after Lux tilted his head, he immediately noticed what she meant.

Behind the girl who was confronting Philuffy, the third year student who was the Academy's strongest, Celistia was putting her hand on the handle of her Sword Device.



Her expression was tense like the usual Celis, she wasn't showing the slightest opening.

"You are the representative of Marcafal Kingdom, Magialca Zen Vanfrick-sama correct?"

Celis quietly spoke that name without taking off her eyes from the girl.

"The manager of Vanfrick company which possess market that cross many countries and enormous fortune....., and then right now, the number one in World Rank, and the captain of Seven Dragon Paladins."

"—!?"

Lux's expression spontaneously stiffened hearing that identification.

This person who looked young in a glance was the Drag-Knight who stood at the top of the world.

He thought that she wasn't an ordinary person from the way she moved her body, but to think—.

"Did you come to test Lux's strength? If that's the case, your joke has gone too far."

But, Celis didn't even show any sign of timidity toward such fact and she spoke with an aloof attitude.

In respond Magialca let out a chuckle and shook her head slightly.

"No way, this is really just a coincidence. My bad if I have made you misunderstood. It's not like I intended to cause a commotion."

She lifted both her hands and closed her eyes, taking the pose of surrender.

And then when Philuffy and Celis lowered their stance, Magialca faced Lux once more.

"In the first place my birthplace wasn't from Marcafal Kingdom. I'm a person who doesn't even belong to any country, but currently I'm being

temporarily employed as the captain of Seven Dragon Paladins. Best regards from now on okay, Lux."

"Ah, yes. I too——"

Magialca held out her right hand. In respond Lux also reacted and shook her hand.

Her body looked delicate from her appearance, but it seemed that it was really trained.

"However, you are a really interesting man just like the rumor. Even though you are the only man in an academy full of girls, it seems that you are really skilled in handling girl."

"N, no....."

‘You are also a very strange person for the captain of Seven Dragon Paladins though.’

While Lux couldn’t say anything like that, the woman before him made an indecent grin and whispered "As I thought, won’t you come to my room later?".

"Lady Magialca. Please don’t say anything strange to Lux. Further touch than that is not permitted."

Celis who saw that put a stop to it with firm attitude.

But, Magialca didn’t look particularly bothered at all, the end of her eyebrows lowered down and she turned a teasing smile at Celis.

"Oh, I heard that the daughter of Ralgris house is a man-hater and serious girl, but it looks like you are really different from the story huh. You ——, don’t tell me that you are falling in love with this man?"

"-.....!?"

The moment she heard that, her mask crumbled for a moment.

However, Magialca didn't pursue any further and changed the topic after letting out a sigh.

"Now then, my business today is to talk with the headmaster, let's meet again later in this campus festival and the summit. At that time I'll depend on you two okay—. Aah, my favorite pupil too, let's have a tea next time slowly."

Magialca only said that before turning on her heel and then she left without pause.

"So that's the captain of Seven Dragon Paladins. The martial art teacher that Phi-chan mentioned, could it be—"

"Yep. That's master. It has been a long time for me too since I met her last."

Philuffy nodded shortly and affirmed it.

This was the person who taught Philuffy who was surpassing the rest by far in unarmed combat, so he imagined that she must be considerably strong, but he never imagined that she would also be an extremely rich person who managed a company.

"But, she is an acquaintance of Relie-san and Phi-chan, so she isn't a bad person right?"

".....Don't know."

"Eh.....?"

Philuffy's unexpected immediately reply caused Lux to ask back reflexively.

"I think that master is perhaps acting only for her own sake you know?"

"Is, that so....."

Because she was expressionless and taciturn, Philuffy was thought to be really unconcerned with her surrounding, but actually she was really good at

seeing through people's true nature.

In other words, her judgment could be trusted.

Regardless of whether Magialca was good or evil, in any case she was someone they couldn't let their guard down against. That seemed to be the correct stance to take.

"Also, Celis-senpai too, thank you very much. I was saved——"

"N, no....., I was just, passing through the place where Lux was at by chance after all."

".....?"

Lux tilted his head seeing Celis suddenly averting her gaze with flustered expression.

Strange.

Even though she was a dignified senior like usual until just now, her attitude suddenly changed completely.

"Are you feeling unwell somewhere? It's unusual for Celis-senpai to——"

The moment Lux approached her, Celis backed away in a flash.

"Eh.....?"

When Lux tilted his head, Celis averted her gaze with blushing cheeks.

"Wha, what's the matter, Celis-senpai.....?"

"N, no, it's nothing. I, it's just a bit of coincidence! That, m, my business is still not finished so, I'll take my leave here!"

After she asserted that in complete panic, Celis dashed away.

Without slowing down at all, she vanished completely from Lux's sight.

Part 3

"Haa, haa..... Just what is wrong with me——!?"

Celis was aware of the heat in her face while running on the Academy's ground.

Strange, something was unusual.

Even though yesterday too she was chided by her father Dist because of her absentmindedness, and she also had endeavored in her training until she ran out of strength, and yet.

Even though she had rushed to Lux's predicament just now and she thought that she had helped him with the best that she could do.

'You ——, don't tell me that you are falling in love with this man?'

The words that Magialca said couldn't leave from inside her head.

The moment she saw Lux's face, she couldn't think anything.

"I've never, felt something like this even once until now——"

Finally she finished running from the back of the campus building until outside the campus gate. Celis was gasping for breath then.

Normally her breathing wouldn't even change after only this much distance, but the fast beating of her heart wouldn't slow down.

Midway she also passed girls her junior, but she passed through without even looking at them.

(I'll patrol outside just for a bit before returning.....)

She felt like she couldn't return like this as long as her body still hadn't calmed down, so Celis was thinking with the 'approach of escaping' that was unusual for her.

But, in practice, in this period of campus festival, the Academy was bustling with activity.

The festival would only be for two days, but it was opened for the outsider, so naturally there would also be 'man' thinking of improper thing coming.

Last year there were also a pervert climbing up the campus building to peep at girl changing, and thief trying to enter the hangar aiming for the Drag-Ride.

At that time Celis and others promptly solved the matter and it ended without turning into serious matter.

(After all if damage really occur, it won't end as trouble to only us.)

Once a damage occurred, the headmaster, the city mayor, perhaps even the royal capital that was managing the Academy wouldn't be able to overlook it.

Celis herself, if she had to say, she was not good with this kind of merry festival where everyone would slightly cut loose, but she was happy seeing a lot of the girls having fun with it.

No, exactly because she was someone who normally was stricter than necessary that she wanted to take the backseat in this kind of event and aided with the relaxation of the girls.

Celis believed that it was a work that she could do.

"Fuu,my heart is finally calming down."

When she finished taking a lap around the outer wall surrounding the vast Academy, she felt herself returning to her former self.

However, Celis's private tutor, Wade who in the past gave her teaching of literary and martial arts.

Even in the book of teaching that Lux's grandfather gave her, they way to deal with this kind of condition wasn't written there.

"It will be great if this is something temporary, but it will be dangerous if this symptoms continue....."

When Celis turned the corner while muttering to herself, she saw the figure of a girl staring still at the campus building slightly away from the gate.

"That's—?"

Celis saw that and tilted her head.

From a glance it wasn't a suspicious person. The person only looked like a town girl from middle class household, but Celis noticed that something is strange.

After all during the time Celis was circling the outer circumference, the person was staring inside from that spot all this time.

"Excuse me, do you have a bit of time?"

When she called out in concern, the town girl returned to her senses in surprise and turned toward Celis.

She looked slight older from Celis by two or three years, although not gorgeous but she was a pretty girl.

"Do you have some kind of business with the Academy? If it's alright with you, can I hear your story?"

"Aa, ahaha..... I'm sorry."

As soon as Celis suggested that, the girl friendlily waved her hand and smiled wryly.

"Actually, I'm a person from different city block. I came here for a bit because of work circumstance, so I came here wondering if I can perhaps meet with a boy who is an acquaintance but—it seems that the place is still in the middle of preparation for the campus festival, I was thinking regretfully that perhaps it's impossible."

"A boy.....? That means, could it be——"

"Yes. Lux Arcadia-kun. Former prince who did chores, though it looks like currently he became a famous person in different meaning at this Cross Field."

The girl muttered with somewhat a distant look.

Seeing how she didn't realize who Celis was when she was equally famous as the daughter of a duke who was one of the four great nobles, most likely the girl herself wasn't a person who was related to noble.

"No, he came to this block at first was because he tried to take back my pouch that was taken by a cat. That's why, I felt something like a bit of responsibility."

"Is, that so."

Celis had heard about the circumstances of how Lux was invited by Lisha and got admitted into the Academy, but she had never heard about the specific of the story until that far.

"Yes, he was an interesting kid. He had worked at my place only for a little bit though. He always looked really busy——"

The girl started talking about reminiscent talk of Lux.

Celis wondered why.

It should be natural seeing that it had only been around half a year since Lux came to the Academy, but when she was told the story about Lux's livelihood doing chores that she didn't know about, her feeling was growing a bit frustrated.

"I see, I'm glad that it looks like he too is having fun here. But—if possible, I think I want to meet with him a bit. I wish to wait until the campus festival but, I have to return within today no matter what because of my work circumstance."

"Tha, that's....."

Celis who heard her wish was hesitating.

In the Academy's rule, normally outsider without authorization wasn't permitted to enter inside.

But, it was possible to bring Lux outside by attaching some kind of reason.

That too originally was something that must not be done but—.

(.....But, she too has expressly come here to meet Lux, and Lux too surely would be happy.)

Celis was lost whether she should bend the Academy's rule for that.

But, when she saw the eyes of the girl that was filled with hope, her feeling would become painful no matter what.

"Tha, that, I'm sorry but.....that, Lux right now is—"

At that moment when Celis was about to say the words of refusal naturally, the town girl's body floated.

"Kyaah!?"

"—!?"

Celis's body burst into movement and caught the body of the girl that was thrown away.

Unnoticed near the campus gate, there were two girls clad in black military uniform standing there.

"You, what are you doing—!?"

Celis quickly helped the girl stood and glared at the girl in military uniform who was acting violently.

One was a tall girl with distinctive crimson hair.

Ominous and daunting hostility was overflowing from her whole body. She was releasing a piercing gaze.

A personification of armed might and malice.

She was a girl who was clad in an atmosphere that would give such impression to anyone who saw her without exception.

She had serious look—no, there was even a faint smile that was tugged on her face, but she was looking down on everything with disdain.

The girl was looking their way with expression that would give such fright to anyone.

"Whaaat?"

The girl's mouth opened widely into crescent shape, then her hand tightly grasped the arm of the town girl.

Right after that, a high-pitched scream leaked out from her mouth.

"-....., AAAAAAH.....!?"

"_____"

Idle thought instantly vanished from Celis's face and her expression changed.

Without hesitation she drew out her rapier shaped Sword Device and thrust the tip at the face of the girl in black clothes.

"Any further violence than that is not permitted. If you refuse than I won't hold back."

Celis threatened with seriousness.

But, even so the girl who was perpetrating her tyranny didn't change her expression at the slightest.

"Violence? It's this lowly girl who is blocking my path isn't it? Looks like the education toward the lower classes has vanished since this country became new kingdom eehh."

"A, UUuuUGHH!"

The girl in black clothes put even more strength and tightened her grip hard as though she was trying to crush the town girl's arm.

At that moment, Celis moved and the rapier's blade flashed.

At the same time the girl also let go of the town girl and thrust out her right fist that was enveloped in glove.

"—Stop it, Celis!"

"Please stop, Rosa-sama"

Two voices came simultaneously, the trajectory of the blade and fist crossed.

Both sides dodged the coming attack in a hair's breadth, and immediately after they quickly took distance.



At the same time, two people cut in between to stop each side. It was third year student of Triad, Sharis, and a glasses girl in military uniform who was different from the red haired girl.

"—Now I lost interest. I thought that I would be able to have a bit of fun."

The girl waved her hand and made a ridiculing smile.

But, rather than that Celis had her attention taken to another place.

"Rosa.....? You, could it be—"

"Nice to meet you. She is the Seven Dragon Paladins who represent Heiburg Republic, Rosa Granhide. I am her aide, Calensia Hersmice."

The intellectual glasses girl at the side gave a greeting like that in the place of Rosa.

Her expression rather than arrogant looked calm instead.

"Heiburg's....."

Celis and Sharis who heard that put themselves on guard with alert expression.

Heiburg Republic.

It was one of the large countries that was famous in the world. A few months ago, they borrowed the help of an arm dealer called Hayes and came invading with a plan that attempted to take over the new kingdom.

But—to the end it was a plan that was spearheaded by the remnants of old empire who were seeking asylum in Heiburg and Hayes.

Heiburg only gave excuse that the plan was something that was arbitrarily done by a single high official who was trying to take over the military affairs helped by two outsiders.

Naturally that explanation couldn't satisfy the new kingdom that received heavy blow from that battle and they raised the question of responsibility but

it kept being an endless argument until the present day.

The information until that point had also reached the ears of Celis and others.

"Rosa Granhide..... I don't remember seeing your face at All-Dragon Battle or anywhere else——"

From her appearance, Rosa's age was around Celis and others.

And yet, Celis had never heard about her existence until now.

"Aa, certainly there was something like that huh. The simple mock battle for the sake of scrambling for the right to investigate Ruins....., I got entered into cell because I got involved with that kind of thing. Even though I only killed around five opponents at the campus selection battle in the military school, they did that to me."

"——!?"

Celis and Sharis shuddered hearing the fact that was said out so calmly.

Hearing the tone of Rosa that didn't contain even a fragment of guilt, they could instantly guess the reason why they had never heard her name until now.

No matter how skilled, certainly someone like this couldn't be allowed to go out of the country.

A slaughterer without common sense or morality.

Thus, her very existence itself was hidden until now.

"....."

Terrifying.

And then at the same time, they could also perceive the situation at Heiburg Republic from this.

The internal condition of Heiburg must be so chaotic that this girl who originally they didn't want to come out to the surface despite her outstanding strength had to be placed in the position of Seven Dragon Paladins.

As expected, although there was a system for fellow country to cooperate with each other, they couldn't let their guard down at all.

"Now then.....we've got to go greeting the headmaster-sama. I'm going to be in the care of you guys for a while. Don't make me get offended okaaay?"

Rosa seemed to have lost interest toward the town girl and entered into the campus gate.

Although Celis wanted to complain, she tried to endure. It was then she noticed the oddness at Sharis beside her.

On her upper arm, there was an emerging bruise that wasn't there previously.

That instant when two people stopped their respective comrade.

Rosa hit hard on Sharis's body so fast that it wasn't noticed.

"Wait. I won't permit you to leave like this without apologizing for your impoliteness toward my friend."

The atmosphere around Celis changed.

Her aura was that of an absolute one that could even be said as mystical.

Celis whose concentration rose until the utmost limit hit the girl before her with hostile intent.

"St, stop it Celis! I'm all right! If a trouble occur here——"

"——Fuh, fufufu. You.....are interesting."

Rosa looked back and the corner of her mouth rose up. Her eyes were tinged with dark wicked light.

"An interesting—strong woman aren't you? Though, only so-so."

"Are you intending to say, that you have no intention to apologize?
Then....."

Celis's hand that was holding the handle of her Sword Device was slightly filled with strength.

But, Rosa kept smiling fearlessly without even the slightest twitch at her eyebrow.

"Unfortunately, I'll pass. There will be hindrance if we start something here right? That'll be a real kill-joy. If something like that happen, I also won't be able to settle it."

"Please restrain yourself, both of you."

Calensia cut in between the two and the explosive atmosphere was slightly defused.

Even so Celis and Rosa kept exchanging gaze. Rosa then spoke while in that situation.

"I'm pleased. I will settle this with you one day in a suitable place. I will smash your strength and pride into pieces, and degenerate you yourself until the bottom of earth."

Rosa left behind a joyful smile and left from that place.

Even after her back vanished into inside the Academy, Celis's hand didn't let go from her Sword Device's handle for a while.

"I'm sorry Sharis. Let's hurry to the medical office."

"You are a bit exaggerating. Just this much often happen in the usual training. However——"

Sharis smiled for a moment, but then she gazed at where the girl in question vanished and muttered.

"The summit where a dialogue with the Lord will be held, is it....."

"Yes, I hope it can end without any incident—such thing is only a wishful thinking isn't it?"

Celis nodded once more in agreement.

The atmosphere of the Academy that was just before the campus festival.

Inside that air of cheerfulness that was wrapped in liveliness and enthusiasm, the sign of fierce storm could be felt.

Part 4

A few hours later.

The inn nearby the government office that was located in the first block of Cross Field.

There, the representatives of each country that were called for the sake of the summit—the members of Seven Dragon Paladins were staying.

The inn couldn't be called as extravagant, but the interior was properly maintained.

Inside a room at the second floor, two girls were exchanging words.

"—Hey, good and evil, in the end which one do you think is stronger?"

One girl was asking with a smile that was tinged with danger.

They were Rosa Granhide who was representing Heiburg Republic in Seven Dragon Paladins, and her aide Calensia.

There were only those two inside that cramped world.

"Of course the whole thing isn't uniform. Strong evil and strong good exist. But for example—if two people with equal strength are fighting, which one do you think will win?"

Among the duo, one was above the other mentally.

That one woman narrowed her eyes sharply and dripped her words into the girl's ear.

The quiet girl sitting at the woman's side, slowly assented with an awkward expression that was vaguely tinged with grief.

".....Of course, it's, evil."

After saying that, the girl peeked at the countenance of the superior woman with wilting gaze, and continued.

"The good, they will become weak the moment they chose good. Obeying the law, valuing morality. The whim of god or ruler.....it's nothing more than laziness that wish for uncertain hope and salvation....., that's why"

The girl muttered with a sorrowful expression that looked as though she was even threatened.

As though she had given up, that it was the only choice available for her.

The lips of the woman who got good mood hearing that answer warped into wicked smug smirk.

"So you get it. Good is—the end of the road for coward who escaped from fight."

The woman expressed her feelings fully in poem loudly, then her hands crawled on the girl's body.

From above the military uniform, five fingers crawled on that breast, massaging it thoroughly with sticky movement, toying with it.

"Ah, kuuh.....!?"

Pleasure and pain, while giving both simultaneously, the woman was enjoying that reaction.

"Evil is the true strength in this world. If you are evil you can pretend to be good, if you are evil you can deceive human's heart, if you are evil you can outwit your opponent, if you are evil you can slip through law's binding—all people are escaping toward good, is because it's comfortable to become sheep. But you will only have your everything stolen there. If it's you, you understand that already aren't you?"

""

"Good people will only get devoured. No hero or anything will come. There is no one in Heiburg who can save you and your family. —You understand don't you? That you can only live as 'evil' from here on too."

".....Yes."

No other option than nodding was allowed.

The girl casted her eyes down with a tone of enduring it.

"Good child. Then, we should put it into action. The action necessary for us to grasp success, as the evil that is in the side of the strong—"

The woman who had different physique pushed down the other girl on the bed.

The woman licked her own lips while whispering her evil design into the girl's ear.

"Forcibly beating them up is no good you know? The new kingdom that has debt toward Heiburg for being a hindrance—we will crush them from inside. We will make them rot with shame and regret from their own failure."

The ceiling was reflected on the hollow eyes of the girl who was pinned down by the absolute evil.

"Ugh, a....."

The girl entrusted her body to the various sensations running through her body while fighting the conflicted feeling that was dyed black inside her heart.

Chapter 2 – Seven Dragons Gathering

Part 1

"Good morning, Relie-san."

"Morning Lux-kun. Can you sleep well last night?"

The headmaster office early in the morning.

After lightly talking with Lisha and Celis who had arrived, Lux exchanged words with Relie.

One day since then, the opening of the summit was finally approaching.

"I believe that you have finished with the briefing but be careful, just as you also know, the representatives of other countries are all a gathering of tricky people you know?"

"I will stay on guard. More importantly——"

"Yes, we will also be as vigilant as possible over here. I'll leave the rest to you."

There was high likelihood that the warmonger, Dragon Marauder that was bearing enmity to countries would come attacking if they knew about the information of this summit.

Thus, it seemed that reinforcement Drag-Knights had been gathered beforehand since a bit of a while ago.

It seemed that powerful fighter like Philuffy and Yoruka were also assigned to protect the Academy, so Lux wasn't really worried.

In that case——.

"Yeah, what's left is how we are going to deal with the discussion."

Lisha who looked slightly nervous was standing beside Lux.

The people who would attend the summit were the Seven Dragon Paladins and their aide, as well as four people who were chosen as representatives of the leaders of various countries.

Lisha would participate in the summit as the representative from the new kingdom among those four.

"At the beginning let's go like we decided in the briefing. Our plan first will be to get information out from the Lords."(Celis)

Or rather, doubtlessly the other countries would also basically do that.

The history of the ancient era that had been surrounded in mystery until now through the span of a few hundred years.

An existence that knew about all of that had descended, so their side had no other option than observing how they would move.

Naturally, during the meeting Lux also had no intention to touch about the matter of Fugil who he had a tie with.

While Lux was calming down his breathing, the Seven Dragon Paladins and their aide, furthermore the the representatives of the leaders from various countries showed up one after another.

There were people who he knew their face and also people who he met for the first time.

"Good morning Lux-kun. Take care of me too today."

"Yahhoo. Are you healthy, Onii-chan."

Coral and Mel called out to him.

After exchanging light pleasantries with the two, Lux also entered the conference room.

It was a spacious room, but there was no window in order to avoid attack from outside, so the room was dim.

Because of that there was lamp placed since the afternoon, illuminating faintly the faces of the representatives from each country.

The seating of the conference room was mainly divided into three group, the four representatives of country leaders, the Seven Dragon Paladins, and then the group of the Lords.

The leaders' representatives were Lizsharte from new kingdom, princess Milmielte from Wanheim Principality, and Minister Gunius from Heiburg Republic in participation.

Pope Nias from Ymir Theocracy was attending because he was the person with highest authority in essence, furthermore there was the archbishop to substitute for him.

And then, except for one person, the seven members of Seven Dragon Paladins and their aide were all present.

The representative from new kingdom was Lux Arcadia. His aide was Celistia Ralgris.

The representative from Wanheim Principality was Greifer Nest, and his aide Coral Esther.

The representative from Ymir Theocracy was Mel Gizalut. With her aide Krulcifer Einfolk.

The representative from Heiburg Republic was, Rosa Granhide. Her aide was Calensia Hersmice.

From Blackend Kingdom was Singlen Shelbrit and his aide Zweigbergk Gimle.

From Marcafal Kingdom was Magialca Zen Vanfrick. Her aide was absent.

—Until here, either Lux knew their face or he heard about them from Celis.

But, the last Seven Dragon Paladins who he had never even heard about their rumor finally showed up inside the room.

".....Wai-, why are you trying to go home after coming this far desu!? Please quickly get inside!"

The figure of a girl wearing hat could be seen using all her strength to pull in a brown skinned arm that could be seen from the other side of the opened door.

While everyone's gaze was gathered over there, before long that figure came out to the open.

"....."

It was a girl wearing thin outfit of foreign country who was looking like she was really reluctant to be her. She was sending a cowering gaze to the surrounding.

She had vibrant dark brown skin and glossy black hair tinged with green color.

Just her appearance was already distinctive enough, but the red tattoo engraved on her face highlighted her unique look even further.

"U, aa——"

The girl who just noticed that she was gathering attention quickly averted her eyes and fell silent.

The girl wearing hat used that chance to drag the girl inside and forcefully sat her down on a chair.

"Ah, our apologize for being late desu. We are the representatives of Turkimes Confederation, the Seven Dragon Paladins Soffice Septy and her aide me——Uruk Septy desu."

Although the girl was introduced like that, she didn't say even a single word.

The Seven Dragon Paladins who appeared last was a girl who seemed to be hard to approach in another different sense compared to all the members until now.

(But what is this? Even though this should be the first time I saw her without a doubt, it feels like she resembles someone——)

When Lux stared fixedly at the girl, Soffice's stare quickly darted around and she averted her face.

In the place of the girl who kept her face looking down, the hat wearing girl spoke toward everyone.

"Eee, Soffice, she has fear of strangers, so she cannot really talk with everyone desu. And so, I will convey her thought as an interpreter, best regard to everyone desu."

".....What a very strange bunches but, well it's fine. Later on just don't make excuse that you didn't talk because you are a poor talker."

The captain Magialca concluded like that and everyone sat down.

Then she put both her elbows on the table and joined her hands together before she looked around at everyone and raised her voice.

"——Well then, now that everyone is here, how about we consolidate our intention right away? The fellows called the Lord something who self-proclaimed that they are the owner of Ruins, how are we going to receive them——but fundamentally those fellows are suspicious."

"Err——, pardon me captain-sama."

The one who raised their hand was the princess of Wanheim Principality, Milmiette.

The girl who was innocent with bright personality was assertive without acting timid even in this place.

"What could you mean by that? By how they moved the Gigas, I believe that the likelihood is high that they are an imperial family of the past who was managing the Ruins though——"

"Your highness Milmiette, she didn't meant that kind of meaning."

The Blue Tyrant, the representative of Blackend Kingdom, Singlen showed a fearless smirk toward that question.

"They, the Lords who wished for dialogue this time claimed that they are the real thing by moving Gigas. Until now we have been excavating——no, plundering Drag-Rides and treasures from the Ruins. There is a possibility that they will question us to take responsibility for that."

"......In other words, if we are taking timid attitude right from the start, we might be hit with retaliation from them, is that what you are saying?"

Everyone in that place closed their mouth hearing Coral's muttering.

That showed one answer.

"Besides those guys, these so called Lords, we also still don't fully understand their true identity. With extreme logic, it could even be thought that they might be stranger who captured the Ruins several hundred years ago before introducing themselves as the ruler of ancient era. If they cannot prove that they are the 'real thing', then we also don't need to act humbly toward them."

Lux could also understand what Magialca was saying.

At the briefing session in the royal capital, Lux, Lisha, and Celis were mostly reminded of the same thing.

The existence and power of Drag-Ride had become something that couldn't be erased for the current livelihood, and the land they were living on also went without saying.

Even if the Lords proclaimed the ownership of those things, there was no way their side could easily accept their demand.

Thus, although this meeting was called a dialogue, but there was no doubt that this was a battle.

If the talk broke down, it was even possible that a war against the Lords could occur in this place.

When everyone tensed their expression once more, a stir could be heard suddenly from outside the room.

Kotsu kotsu The sound of shoes stepping on the floor was approaching, and before long the door was slightly opened.

"—My apologize to make all of you wait, honored representatives from each country."

A transparent voice reverberated and that figure came to view.

A young girl clad in sparkling pure white dress was bowing with a smile.

Silver long hair and asymmetrically colored eyes.

That mystical beauty which was out of this world completely changed the air of the place that was filled with tension.

Lux and others held strong vigilance toward that face which resembled the imperial family of the old empire.

"I am an imperial family member of the ancient era when the Ruins existed—a survivor of the Lords. First imperial princess Listelka Rei Arshalia. And then this is my lady attendant, Mishis V Xfer. And last, my knight, Fugil vi Arcadia."

Beside the princess who introduced herself as Listelka, two attendants appeared.

The blue haired maid Mishis who Lux had caught sight of beside Hayes previously.

And then, the moment Lux saw that man who was wearing an extravagant cloak, his head was wrapped with heat.

".....!? That guy, is Fugil? What—I also, recalled seeing him somewhere"

Even Lisha let out a small groan when seeing Fugil, perhaps in recollection of something.

On the other hand, Lux closed his mouth tightly and repressed his emotion immediately.

"First let me express my thanks to everyone from each country for preparing this chance and place for a dialogue in response to my sudden introduction and demand—and then as a proof of friendship, I will promise to hand over two hundred Drag-Rides for each country."

"——!?"

Those words that were spoken with friendly tone caused everyone present to blink.

Even Lux doubted his ear for a moment whether he had heard mistakenly, but right after that the representatives of each country's leaders, Pope Nias and Princess Milmiette, furthermore even Minister Gunius raised their voice reflexively.

"I, is that true, Listelka-dono?"

"That's amazing. But, two hundred Drag-Rides, for each country, it's——"

"Unbelievable! Even after using the Ruin investigation right five, six times in a year, at best there would only be a few dozen Drag-Rides that could be excavated, to hand over that many all at once....."

Even a single general purpose Drag-Ride had a price that was above an average house.

Drag-Ride that each country gathered little by little from Ruins by paying with time and sacrifice was still that much of a precious weapon.

The atmosphere inside the room slightly loosened up in reaction to the unimaginable present.

But, even among them, it was only the multi-millionaire Magialca and Singlen who weren't perturbed.

They were smiling without the slightest change in their expression even against that 'advance payment' that could be said as unprecedented.

"Of course. This is nothing more than a meager greeting. For those who are able to get into our good grace, we will even bestow them with even rarer treasure or Divine Drag-Ride. Specifically from here on——"

"I don't get it, o Lord-sama whatever."

Magialca's voice suddenly cut apart the boiling up atmosphere of the place.

She showed that crooked and vaguely twisted smile while gazing at Listelka who was in front of her.

"My bad to cut off your talk. But, I'm also the head of a company you see, when I heard a story that is too suspicious, I am conditioned to reflexively speak out even against my better judgment. You can continue if you want?"

"Please don't misunderstand. I am serious you know?"

Listelka spoke once more with gentle voice like before, but Magialca snorted.

"There is nothing more expensive than something free——. I wonder if that saying also existed a few thousand years ago? You would let us slurp up such sweet honey right at the beginning, just what are you planning to make us do for you after that?"

"....."

The Lord, Listelka who heard that fell silent while still smiling slightly.

But, before long she casted down her eyes as though resolving herself and she slowly sighed.

"It can't be helped then. I wished to broach this topic after having a bit more pleasant talk but——"

With that as the preface, the imperial princess lightly took a deep breath.

And then she surveyed her surrounding, and spoke with a serious expression.

"If I have to say the main issue, this world will perish in less than half a year."

"——What?"

It was unknown who was the one that reflexively said that.

Perhaps it was one of the Seven Dragon Paladins, or perhaps one of the leaders' representatives.

But, in any case the relaxed atmosphere from just now was getting through upheaval after those words that were spoken out calmly.

".....Can we hear about the specific?"

After Magialca prompted without any change in her fearless expression, Listelka nodded shortly.

"I believe that everyone is already aware, about the phenomenon of destruction that is called calamity, and the existence of Nocturnal. There exist a system in this world that is the foundation which brought about those things. It is called as 'Sacred Eclipse', a mechanism that will destroy the world." (TN: Before I mistranslated this as Sacred Eater, the correct one is Sacred Eclipse)

"Sacred Eclipse, you say?"

Lisha muttered with a dubious face, but this was acting.

Lux and others, the people in new kingdom's side had information from the data they brought back from the Ruin Hall shared with them, but they were concealing that they knew about it.

It was in order to confirm whether the Lord, Listelka was saying the truth or not.

"Yes. In the ancient era when we existed, using the resource and technology at that time, we were living extremely prosperously. But, even the long peace would be visited by the end. A dispute with the attempt to monopolize that technology and resource occurred, dragging a lot of people into it and a deathly battle began. In order to bring to a close that great uprising that spanned through a long time, our ancestor constructed a mechanism to destroy the ringleaders. That is exactly the final annihilation mechanism that is called the Sacred Eclipse—the greatest and strongest humanoid-type Ragnarok."

"_____"

The past history that Listelka spoke out.

Everyone present was speechless hearing that blood soaked truth.

But, before long a hand was raised from the seats of the leaders' representatives as though returning to their senses.

"Wa, wait a second Lord-dono!? As expected that's unbelievable. Sacred Eclipse that exists in order to destroy mankind you say? If such thing really exist, shouldn't all of us died already?"

Nias quietly rocked his chair and raised his voice.

With a graceful smile, Listelka answered the question from the young pope who still had trace of youth in himself.

"Yes. Originally Sacred Eclipse is the final weapon to destroy everything with the exception of the ancient race and the Lords. But, with that alone it will also massacre the virtuous and innocent people. Thus at the phase when

the majority of the humans who spearheaded the conflict had been destroyed, the imperial family at the time deactivated the Sacred Eclipse."

The girl spoke the answer matter-of-factly like that.

"The ancient race that brought about the Ruins in this planet, and the clan of Lord that received it. There is a land of paradise that is known and can only be entered by the imperial family and their aides who were chosen people even among them all—the 'Avalon'. Only in that place that contained all wisdom, technology, and treasures of the ancient time, stopping Sacred Eclipse and preventing the ruin of the world can be done."

stir

The air of the conference room shook slightly from the words that Listelka muttered earnestly with her eyes casted down.

"I wish to ask one thing."

Taking advantage of that opening, a small figure wearing blue robe, Singlen quietly lifted his face.

"Why is that deactivated Sacred Eclipse something get resurrected in this era?"

The question that could be said as only natural in a sense was immediately answered by Listelka.

"I'm also unable to grasp the cause clearly, but I believe that most likely the people of this era was doing some kind of interference to the Ruins. After all I only received revelation from Avalon, of the fact that Sacred Eclipse was resurrected."

"Revelation, received?"

When Lisha frowned, the Lord imperial princess abruptly smiled.

"It's because I am the 'Shrine Maiden of Oracle'. Through a rite called Baptism, I obtained the power to receive information from Avalon—the

holy ground of the Lord."

The girl who originally possessed the name of Arcadia was introducing herself as Rei Arshalia pointed out that she had become the shrine maiden that was able to hold correspondence with Avalon.

"....."

While listening to that story, Lux slightly met his gaze with Krulcifer's to confirm.

About the existence of the mechanism to destroy the world called Sacred Eclipse.

About the necessity to head to Avalon in order to stop it.

Until this point, everything should be unvarnished truth that matched the information that they brought back from the Hall in Ymir Theocracy.

"And, how can we reach that Avalon something?"

Magialca asked with folded arms. Listelka didn't answer the question immediately.

After surveying everyone who was waiting for her words with held breath, she took a deep breath.

"Do you know about the jewel that is called Grand Force? The seven crystals that existed in seven Ruins. By setting them in the deepest part of all the Ruins, the path to Avalon will be opened. Stopping Sacred Eclipse that will destroy the world, obtaining the inheritance and technology of Avalon, and guiding this world to true peace. Those are the wishes of us the Lords."

"_____"

The presented solution.

With superb timing as though she was reading people's heart, the imperial princess opened her mouth once more.

"We the survivor of Lord had been sleeping for many years inside the Ruins, but recently we awakened and got perplexed by the change of this world. We don't know whether this era, the people of this culture would be able to accept us. Due to that anxiety, for a while we were watching over the situation."

She was looking at the expression of the representative of each country while appealing with heartrending expression.

"But—there is no more time. If we don't borrow everyone's power and stop the Sacred Eclipse right away, the whole world will perish. It's deplorable but, about half of the current Ruins are disconnected from our control, we can do nothing except operating some amount of function. In order to save this world together, please lend us your strength."

The talk seemed to be over with that, because Listelka kept sitting down with a small bow.

Right after a slight stir, a small silence was created.

Before long, at the timing when it seemed that everyone had digested her words, a hand was raised.

It was Minister Gunius of Heiburg Republic, a middle-aged man with slightly good physique.

"So that's how it is, surely it is indeed sorrowful. I have heard about the existence of crystal that is called Grand Force. If I remember correctly that is——"

"Yes. The crystal is hidden and protected inside the body of Ragnarok. All the seven Ragnarok has to be defeated. At present Poseidon from the Ark and Yggdrasil from the Gigas are defeated, but the remaining five has to be subjugated swiftly no matter what."

Listelka nodded and began to talk about the concrete plan in order to liberate all the Ruins.

But at that moment, the princess of Wanheim Principality, Milmiette tilted her head and raised her hand.

"Pardon me. Please wait a second. I understand that it's necessary for us to defeat Ragnarok and obtain the Grand Force. But, what should we do to enter until that far? It can be said for almost all of the Ruins, that each country here is unable to enter until the deepest part of the Ruins, barring some special exception——?"

"Indeed it is like that. Even if we go to defeat the Ragnarok, the path won't open."

Even Pope Nias also nodded in agreement.

The matter of Lux and Krulcifer entering inside the Hall hadn't been told to him.

When the representatives of other countries also showed agreeing expression, Listelka's gaze slowly darted around before staring at the face of a certain girl.

Her gaze was pouring toward Krulcifer who was sitting as the aide of Ymir Theocracy's Seven Dragon Paladins.

"I forgot to say but, we the Lord has cooperator. Our compatriot, the descendants of the ancient race that brought the Ruins into this world—the existence that is called as 'Xfer'. Isn't that right, Krulcifer Einfeldt?"

".....!?"

Everyone present held their breath once more toward Listelka's identification.

Krulcifer herself seemed to be resolved. She didn't show any agitation and only casted her eyes down.

"It's troubling even if you address me that intimately. I knew about the story that my origin is from Ruin was only when I was quite old already.

Even if you call me as compatriot while I have no self-consciousness of it, but unfortunately I have no recognition of all of you."

Krulcifer curtly responded like that.

While it may be true that the ancient race and the clan of Lord had intimate relationship with each other historically, Krulcifer showed that she had no intention to emulate that with her statement just now.

But, it appeared that Listelka too had anticipated it beforehand, she smiled wryly without looking particularly discouraged.

"That's unfortunate. If possible I wished that you would come to our side right away as our comrade though. Just like Mishis, my attendant beside me."

"Oo, then that blue haired woman is also——"

"Yes. I am a survivor of Ruin's technician——of ^{Key's Supervisor} Xfer ."

When Minister Gunius threw a question, the woman who was the only one wearing maid uniform in this conference room, Mishis bowed and answered.

^{Key's Supervisor}
"Our Xfer clan can literally open various door of Ruins and we possess the authority to manage the Ruin's function. In short it is the authority of the ancient race that created the Ruins themselves."

"Then, by using your power, all the Ruins could be immediately——"

Minister Gunius showed joyful look, but Mishis silently shook her head.

"The problem isn't that simple. Even us Xfer is limited in what we can do. Especially in the case where we interfere with the main system of Ruin, we will temporarily lose our personal supervisory authority toward Ruin. If I use my authority to open an especially important door, I will become unable to similarly do the same at other Ruin too until a certain period has passed."

"So, that means?"

Listelka nodded at the words of Princess Milmiette.

"Yes. Without obtaining the cooperation of Krulcifer-san over there, it will be difficult to liberate all the Ruins in the remaining half a year, that's what this means. By all rights, we wish to search for other survivor of Xfer too but....., there were various things which caused a lot of people's whereabouts to be unknown at the present."

"I see."

After the span of a single breath of silence, Magialca made a sticky smile.

"The mechanism called Sacred Eclips woke up and now we need to prevent the world destruction. In order to do that you want us to liberate all seven Ruins and reached Avalon. That's what you are saying right?"

"It helps that you understand. Let us all cooperate with each other and save this world from destruction."

Listelka lightly clapped her palms together *pon* and gave a broad smile.

In a glance it looked like the talk was getting through to everyone, but there were several large questions remaining.

When Lux was hesitating whether he should ask them, the air shook.

"—And, how long do we need to go along with this foolish talk?"

A man with dark gaze fearlessly grinned and chopped up the flow until now.

The Seven Dragon Paladins of Blackend Kingdom, the Blue Tyrant, Singlen Shelbrit.

The leaders' representatives of other countries seemed to be flustered because of that way of talking that was just too haughty. The color of their face changed for the worse.

"Pardon me. But I am unable to understand the intention of the words you spoke?"

The moment Listelka responded still with gentleness, this time it was Lux who opened his mouth.

"Is there a proof that the world will be really destroyed by that Sacred Eclipse? I think that's what he meant."

The existence of an imperial family of the 'ancient era' that appeared from Ruin.

Furthermore there was the big revelation of Xfer and Avalon. Because of that anyone became apt to forget about the basic question.

The end of the world due to Sacred Eclipse.

If that premise wasn't certain, forcefully wrenching open the Ruins would be too dangerous.

If they summoned a Ragnarok, one country or even the whole world might get ended just from that.

Actually even Lux and co only won by a hair's breadth against a Ragnarok before this after doing everything in their power. It wouldn't be strange even if they got annihilated at that battle.

The existence of Sacred Eclipse was also recorded in the information that he brought back together with Krulcifer, but he wanted the proof that it was the truth.

When Lux called that doubt to attention with such intention, the girl sitting beside him also nodded.

"I too agree with Lux's opinion."

Celis lifted up her face like that as someone in the position as the aide of the new kingdo's Seven Dragon Paladins.

"Ragnarok is a dangerous existence. At the previous fight, it was in superior position even when it was facing against a group of Divine Drag-

Ride users. Thinking about the damage to the surrounding territory and the sacrifice, speaking about subjugating them that thoughtlessly is——"

That opinion came from Celis herself, not from the briefing Lux and others had beforehand.

She was the daughter of an influential feudal lord who was one of the four great nobles.

Exactly because she bore the responsibility as someone standing above others and those words came out from herself.

But, faster than Listelka could answer, a voice cut in from the side.

"Oooh? You're a greedy woman just like that lewd body huh. What a wretched fellow."

The voice's owner was the Seven Dragon Paladins of Heiburg Republic who didn't say even a single word until now, Rosa Granhide.

She was a tall girl who outfitted herself with jet black military uniform. Her red hair that was like fresh blood swayed.

Her eyes with their small pupil that gave the impression of a poisonous snake glared at Celis from the side.

".....What could you mean by that?"

"My bad if you caught my words just now. I was just talking to myself you seeeee. Don't mind me, academy's strongest-sama."

Rosa was provoking even more with a sticky tone that was coiling like snake.

"If you have something you want to say, then how about saying it clearly?"

Surely Celis was also angry, but she pressed her question without letting it show on her face till the end.

Then Rosa put her hand on her mouth and her shoulders shook with bewitching laughter.

"No you seee, I'm embarrassed just from hearing you talked. Just because you don't want to risk danger for yourself and your own country, the aide of a Seven Dragon Paladins who represented the country of all people could unashamedly say cowardly things like that. There is a limit even in being shameless okaay"

".....!?"

As expected, even Celis made a forbidding look at that transparent provocation.

She faced the sneering Rosa and immediately spoke a rebuttal.

"I am not driven by cowardice. I am only expressing my opinion as someone who has fought a Ragnarok before. At the present time where it cannot be judged that Sacred Eclipse and Avalon definitely exist, releasing a Ragnarok is too dangerous."

"Besides—there is no guarantee that the awakened Ragnarok will be facing us until it died just like we expected."

Lux moved to back up Celis with persistent calmness.

"If we failed to finish it off and it escape, many town and village at the surrounding would also get involved and get destroyed. And the country with the highest risk of getting such damage is the new kingdom that has three Ruins inside its territory. We cannot fully participate in the strategy without first discovering flawless preparation and countermeasure."

"Ri, right....."

The leaders' representatives from each country also hummed in understanding at what Lux said.

Thinking back it was really just as he said. They showed an attitude of agreeing with Celis's remark once more.

Regarding the case of Yggdrasil, it was reported to the new kingdom as well as other foreign countries that it was battled and defeated in the middle of investigating the Ark.

There were also the case of Philuffy receiving influence from Abyss, and the fact that the intrusion into the Ark was without permission in the first place, so Lux could only speak with indirect expression like that.

But, Rosa didn't touch that part, she merely scoffed at Lux's rebuttal.

"Oh? That's not something that matters in the slightest isn't it? It's just ten or twenty villages and towns. If we can save the world with that, it's a cheap price to pay right?"

"Are you sane!? What do you think a country is——"

Celis's body spontaneously trembled but, she didn't rush toward the enemy.

".....Heey, Lord-sama. The honorable representatives of this cowardly country are saying that kind of thing but, is the world can really be saved by doing something like thiiis?"

Rosa licked her lower lip and showed a fawning smile at Listelka.

But, the imperial princess didn't get provoked and smiled gracefully.

"I believe that their opinion is only natural. The capture of revitalized Ruins and the subjugation of Ragnarok. It will be a complete lie if I say that there will be no resulting victim from each country. And so, of course our side will also prepare the reward in order to compensate for that burden."

"——Reward you say?"

Minister Gunius eagerly leaned forward hearing that. In respond Listelka nodded with a smile.

"Yes. We wish to give to the country that provide contribution to reach Avalon, the right to make use the technology of ancient era, and gift of

gratitude from the empire of us the Lord."

"—Oo!"

The atmosphere was instantly filled with excitement.

"More specifically, for each subjugation of the remaining five Ragnarok, we will bestow additional gift of a hundred general purpose Drag-Rides as well as two Divine Drag-Rides. We will also gift more reward For travelling to the deepest part of the Ruin, with Drag-Ride or treasure. And then, for the country that raises the most contribution in the capturing, we will share half of the land and treasures sleeping inside Avalon."

"That's really good to hear. It will be worth it to make sacrifices for those rewards."

The eyes of Minister Gunius from Heiburg Republic were sparkling.

But, on the other hand Pope Nias, Princess Milmiette, and others of the moderate faction were watching that with a complicated expression.

That was a difference in reaction that came from discrepancy in point of view.

For those who wouldn't balk at making sacrifices of people and soldier, this proposal must be extremely attractive.

"Also—there are three other important issues that we wish to be solved."

Listelka was looking at the reeling atmosphere while opening her mouth once more.

"First is the suppression of the force that is called the Dragon Marauder, the thieves who ransacked the Ruins of our empire despite being mere mercenary force of Drag-Knight. Their annihilation has to be done in haste right away."

"....."

Perhaps it was unexpected for the name of Dragon Marauder to come out here, because several of the leaders' representatives reacted.

Their reaction also came because the Lords were aware of the organization's existence, but mainly it was because the Lords were considering the Dragon Marauder to be a clear threat—as an enemy that had to perish.

"With all due respect, Listelka-sama. They are employed soldiers—mere mercenaries. Their existence is an eyesore but, I wonder if there is a need to go so far as to purposefully aim for their destruction....."

Pope Nias spoke forward like that, but Listelka silently shook her head.

"No, at the very least they should know about the matter in regard to Avalon."

"Wha-.....!?"

The representatives opened their eyes wide in surprise. Listelka smiled to them and continued.

"The information about Avalon shouldn't be that easily obtained even from the Ruins but..... —Well, let's put that aside for now. But based from what we heard about their action, we can only think that this is the case."

"Lux, this is....."

Celis beside him glanced his way in surprise.

In contrast Lux gave a small nod and showed his agreement.

The talk they had at the briefing session in the royal capital.

Lux's prediction that Dragon Marauder was taking action with an objective in mind was right in the mark.

"It will be troubling if people with ill will like them break into Avalon ahead of us. With how they are aiming for the capture of Ruin just like us, they are an opponent that ought to be defeated."

In addition, Listelka promised even more bounty if Dragon Marauder's leaders were defeated, and their very organization itself was crushed.

"The second issue is the search for the seventh Ruin, the 'Moon'. The whereabouts of the existence of the Ruin itself is unknown, so nothing can be started without first discovering it before subjugating the Ragnarok."

"The seventh Ruin, the Moon..... If I remember correctly, it should be floating in the sky of Turkimes Confederation previously wasn't it?"

Minister Gunius muttered that and turned his face toward the two representatives of Turkimes Confederation.

"....."

The Seven Dragon Paladins Soffice was staying quiet, so her aide Uruk answered in her place.

"Eeerr, I don't know where it went and I haven't heard anything.....is what Soffice said desu. Also that's right, don't stare hard at me like that, it's embarrassing! Is what Soffi—mugah!?"

The neck of Uruk who was speaking cheerfully was wordlessly grabbed by Soffice's reaching hand.

"Do, don't say unnecessary thing, is what Soffice said desu! In regard to me-.....!"

"....."

Perhaps that innocent dialogue cleared up the poisonous air, because there was no more hounding toward the two after that.

But the next moment, that relaxed air was blown away.

"Then, for the last, about the third issue—getting rid of the traitor who existed among these representatives of seven countries."

"——!?"

Instantly, another type of nervousness that was different from until just now was stretched inside the room.

At the same time, everyone in that place looked at each other's face.

"Suddenly the atmosphere become stormy here. Even though there are a lot of fellows you only met for the first time here, you already came saying that there is traitor among us?"

While the other representatives were drawing back, Magialca responded with a provocative grin.

In contrast Listelka's face was staying graceful and her lips abruptly loosened into a smile.

"It seems that there was faulty expression in what I said, my apologies. The point is that what I meant just now also include about the matter from here on."

"From here on, you mean.....?"

Listelka casted her eyes down and nodded toward the question of Pope Nias who was making a doubtful face.

"It's already applied to the present but, from here on we will be forming an alliance, so hiding something among each other will be unforgivable. If at the next time any country makes a false report regarding Ruin's capture, or snatching treasure without permission, and the likes—, we will consider that country as 'enemy' and attack."

"Wha.....!?"

The leaders' representatives who were having joyful look from getting shown a glimpse of the benefit they could receive suddenly got flustered and uneasiness oozed out from their expression.

"This is a matter that concerned the destruction of the world if we fail, so we have to pay meticulous attention. We cannot entrust our trust to a country that disrupt the agreement due to their own desire. Please pardon us for this.

In return, regarding the things that everyone took out from the Ruins until now, we won't ask you to return them."

She emphasized the last line with unchanging calm smile.

"Ye, yes. That is helpful for us."

Minister Gunius nodded in representation of the thinking of each country.

The remaining leaders' representatives also quickly kept up an expression of agreement.

(As expected, huh.....)

Ymir Theocracy that kept quiet about the existence of Automata Ney Louches, and the new kingdom that possessed one Grand Force were also like that but—most likely the other countries were also hiding information regarding Ruin that only they knew about.

Thus, Listelka's casual reminder and pressure caused them to get flustered.

But, it would be bad if the negotiation ended like this.

The moment Lux was going to raise his hand with that thinking, Magialca opened her mouth first.

"—Dealing with traitor right away huh, well, that's an obvious decision I guess."

She put her joined hands behind her head and then rocked her chair playfully like a kid.

But, her innocent smile warped obscenely and she glared at Listelka.

"But, how will you give us proof that you Lords aren't lying? It can't be helped if you all are considered as enemy too if you betray us the same—if you can assert that then I'll accept it."

"Of course, I agree with that."

Listelka too also replied immediately at Magialca's rebuttal.

With this the atmosphere became one that didn't allow any country to declare that they couldn't accept this condition.

The moment they said anything like that, they would be judged that their country was hiding something damning.

"I see. Then with our direction decided like that—how about we talk about the specific at some other time? The people here are only the representative of the ruler of each country, and we also have to decide the fine detail of the contract. There are still many things to do."

"It seems so. If everyone else is also fine with that, then please go with that."

".....Got it. The new kingdom too, I will report to her majesty Queen Raffy of this."

After Lisha replied, the other leaders' representatives also agreed one after another.

The talk of the alliance was concluded for the time being. A relaxed atmosphere was starting to flow inside the room.

The situation showed the sign of closure for the time being and everyone would breakup, but,

"A, everyone of the new kingdom. For the end, I have a request that is just like something additional."

Suddenly Listelka addressed Lux and others like that.

Lisha showed a slightly perplexed expression. Then Listelka leaned her face further forward.

"In this location, the Academy, there is a place that is called practice ground isn't it? I also heard that there will be an event called a campus festival from tomorrow here—?"

"Certainly that is so but, what about it?"

"Can you add a side attraction that I am thinking into that festival? Let's see. What do you think about a mock battle—a skill demonstration battle between fellow Drag-Knight representatives gathered here?"

"—What did you say?"

It seemed that it wasn't just Lisha who was taken by surprise.

No need to mention Lux and Celis, even the other representatives were also frowning in perplexity.

".....Ridiculous, why do we have to intentionally quarrel between ourselves?"

Pope Nias of Ymir Theocracy flared up like that, but,

"It's not anything like quarrel....., just a side entertainment. Besides from what I heard, all of you were also opening a tournament that was called something like All-Dragon Battle in order to obtain the right to investigate Ruins though."

'Nuu', the leaders' representatives were at a loss for words. Seeing that, Listelka pushed even further.

"But—we the owner of Ruins will also endorse the personnel who will be made to capture the Ruins from here on. That's why we wish to at least know the strength of everyone as a cooperator who will fight together with you all."

"....."

She argued with a friendly smile, but the four leaders' representatives of each country made a dissatisfied face.

Even Lux understood the reason of that.

They didn't want to show their hand by purposefully making their main force fought each other in this place where the representatives from many countries were gathered.

Depending on how one thought, they could just hold back in the fight but—.

"—Then, I will grant the right to investigate the first Ruin, Babel to the representative of the country who is victorious in this mock battle. The period will be a month. If it's during that time, then the country of the victor will be allowed to investigate the Ruin no matter how many times."

"Wa, wait, your highness! What are you saying so suddenly!?"

When Lisha yelled in panic, the expression of Lux and Celis also changed.

The first Ruin, Babel, existed right in new kingdom, at the territory that was located in the west.

It was also the territory that was governed by Celis's father, one of the four great nobles Dist Ralgris.

In the case that a foreign country temporarily obtained that right, there was a possibility that the new kingdom would be hit by its aftermath.

It was already a big problem if a Ruin was poked and Abyss surged out at the surrounding. They would have to protect the people from that. And yet they wouldn't get any benefit at all from that investigation.

Furthermore if even a Ragnarok appeared then, there was a risk that the territory would be destroyed immediately.

"It's just as Princess Lisha said. Babel is a Ruin that is difficult to capture, in the first place—"

Celis attempted to stop the talk in a hurry, but Listelka didn't withdraw.

"We the owner of Ruins wish to entrust the capture of a Ruin to a country that we can rely on. Is there anything mistaken in what I said?"

"Bu, but that kind of important talk, without first discussing it with mother....."

The moment Lisha averted her face and muttered, Listelka's attitude suddenly changed.

"My? Are you assuming the position of a country's princess with such state of affairs? To be unable to make any decision by yourself without asking someone else and obtained a backing first—that's astonishing."

"——"

Listelka's smile was the same like before.

Whether it was her gentle expression, and also her calm tone.

But, the glint that was emitted from those asymmetrically colored eyes was oozing emotion that was different from everything until now.

Like a blade, those callous words stabbed the chest of the girl who was chosen as substitute.

"-.....!? I——"

Lisha who bit hard on her lower lip lifted up her face to make objection.

Lux tried to cut in between them to cover for her, it was then,

"Isn't this interesting. That side entertainment, let me nominate myself to participate in it."

"O, oo! So you will do it, Lady Rosa!"

Minister Gunius leaked out voice of admiration at the red haired girl's coming forward.

Rosa Granhide.

The female Seven Dragon Paladins who had the nickname of 'Witch of Steel' declared that loudly.

A small stir was spreading through everyone present who saw that.

The unexpected suggestion from the Lords.

A mock battle between fellow Drag-Knights who represented their country with the Ruin investigation right for a month at stake.

All the other countries were showing indecisive attitude, but because Heiburg Republic snapped at the bait, it became hard to stop this flow of event.

But it would be bad to not stop it because of the risk that 'prize' would bring to the new kingdom.

"Thank you very much. If there is no one who comes forward to introduce themselves as a contender, we will prioritize you to be the one to investigate the Babel."

Lisha paled hearing Listelka's words.

When she was about to speak out an objection, a presence suddenly moved beside her.

"I understand Rosa. As the aide of new kingdom's Seven Dragon Paladins, I, Celistia Ralgris will fill the role as your opponent."

"......Celis-senpai!?"

Lux raised his voice in surprise at what she said, but Celis sent a straightforward gaze at Rosa.

She confronted the 'enemy' before her as a great noble who represented the new kingdom.

"Hee, a member of one of the four great nobles that are famous even in the new kingdom. To be able to have you who are the Academy's strongest as my opponent, what a honor this iiiiis."

"It's just as you wished. There is also the matter of the injury you gave Sharis."

Celis calmly responded toward Rosa who was snickering smugly.

Seeing the gaze of the two crossed each other, Lux spontaneously held his breath.

A short time ago, he two of them exchanged attack in front of the Academy.

A town girl of Cross Field got dragged into it, and Sharis was lightly injured. Even Lux also heard about that incident from Triad.

Lux who recalled it approached Celis's side in hurry.

"Celis-senpai, please be careful. Most likely she is——"

"I understand that this is a trap. But, there is no other way except to accept now that she has gone this far. I judged that we have to accept their challenge instead."

The first Ruin inside the territory of new kingdom——Babel. A skill demonstration battle would be held with the right to investigate it for a month as the prize.

If they didn't win this fight, there was a possibility that new kingdom might receive a large damage from the Abyss that overflowed out in the process of the investigation.

If the representatives of other countries also didn't declare their interest to participate, this situation might be avoidable, but after Rosa showed her will to join the battle, that option was gone.

And so, Celis raised her hand to nominate herself with resolve of that.

".....It looks like there won't be any other who will want to participate isn't it? Then, it will be a match between Heiburg Republic against New Kingdom Atismata——"

"Please wait! I will also participate. Please let me fight together with her as representative of the new kingdom."

".....Lux!?"

"My?"

Celis was surprised hearing Lux's request, while Rosa's eyes blinked in surprise.

Lisha too reflexively sent her gaze to Lux with a dubious expression.

"O, oi Lux, why even you....."

"Forgive me Lisha-sama. But, I have some kind of bad premonition. There is no way I can let Celis-senpai fight by herself."

"Lux....., you are——"

The moment Celis's expression shook in a daze, Listelka raised her voice once more.

"That's what he say but, the aide of Heiburg Republic's Seven Dragon Paladins, Calensia-san, what will you do?"

"I, I'm, that's——,yes. I will, participate."

The glasses girl standing by behind Rosa showed a flustered state, but a gaze was directed to her from Rosa beside her and she nodded hesitantly.

Rather than agreeing to fight, it was more like she couldn't go against Rosa's intention.

"Then, let's put the arrangement of the detail for later. Everyone, thank you very much for everything today."

Listelka concluded with a smile and the summit closed its curtain.

The dialogue where tension, shock, and then haggling was entangled intricately met its end temporarily like this.

"I'm also busy. For now everyone is to step back. Later I will contact to talk about the fine detail. You all keep your focus."

After the meeting was over, Magialca told everyone that as the captain and left her seat.

One by one the leaders' representatives also left the room. After that the man who was standing all this time in the shadow also went out to the corridor alone.

Celis and Lisha let out a sigh 'fuu' from the content of the meeting. Lux left them behind and moved his feet.

—

The knight who was present as Listelka's guard—Fugil.

The older brother who was slowly walking calmly passed through in front of the waiting Lux.

"Is there nothing that you are going to say to me? —Nii-san."

Lux threw a question along with a chilly gaze.

Fugil who was going to pass through uneventfully stopped walking, then he looked back at Lux behind him.

His gaze crossed with the gaze of Lux who made the same motion, then he replied with that bold smile.

"What's the matter my younger brother, do you want an advice from me again? Aa, or else you want to greet me? It has been a long time huh—it's great that you seem healthy."

Fugil grinned with a jest. It caused Lux's heart to be disarrayed.

It was an admonishing attitude that was the same like when he taught Lux the way to fight as Drag-Knight or when Lux consulted him about the plan to change the old empire.

Lux's old wound from the betrayal of someone who he once trusted received a painful sensation as though it was gouged open.



"What are you scheming this time? Five years ago you destroyed the old empire, this time what are you going to do next to the imperial family of the Lord. —Answer me"

Even so, he wouldn't hesitate anymore.

He would face his past failure and asked the truth from this man.

But, it was as though even that resolve was seen through. The man before him sighed in lamentation.

"My objective? You are incomprehensible guy as always. A pathetic man. Hey my younger brother. Just what's with you? Since when you became reduced—reduced into such a fool?"

"——"

Lux's heart froze from the gesture his elder brother showed.

He was resolved to be replied back with sarcasm, to be laughed down, to be told off maliciously.

But, Fugil didn't show any of that. Instead he laughed derisively in complete exasperation.

His gaze was pitying in thorough disappointment.

".....You cannot answer, in other words you have a hidden motive, is that it?"

It was the best Lux could do to tighten his expression so he could reply back without trembling voice.

That was how much Lux was swallowed by the atmosphere of Fugil who he confronted as someone who would fight in the same side with him once more.

At the era of the old empire, when Lux saw Fugil for the first time, he thought that Fugil's existence was out of place even among the imperial family.

But the man existing before him right now looked even more different to him.

It was as though the man was sinking and sinking—sinking so completely he couldn't even see his figure.

It was dark like a bottomless abyss, containing an unknown terror.

"Do you want it to be like that? For the conclusion of that revolution you caused to be an unfortunate accident that was caused by my evil trick? That you were only led astray by evil that is me, that you were a righteous and honest imperial family member. My cute little brother, if that's what you want me to tell you then how about I say it."

"Don't—screw around."

Those sweet words that were as though coiling around him caused Lux to respond with an enraged gaze.

At the same time his hand unconsciously touched the handle of the Sword Device on his waist.

But, Fugil's expression was unchanged from his mocking smile and he slowly walked away from Lux.

And then, with a kind tone that was filled with a lethal dose of deadly poison, Fugil whispered into his ear.

"—Isn't it wonderful. Very splendid my younger brother. That righteousness that is unable to sacrifice even a single relative, unable to discard anything. Your ephemeral ideal that is trying to save even the evil, I'll root for it from the bottom of my heart."

With that preface, the whisper continued even further toward the petrified Lux.

"You stand up with your own will in order to overcome your sin, and stand on this place as Drag-Knight representative. If it's you then surely you won't be mistaken, this time for sure. You won't be betrayed. You won't fail. This

He was in the long corridor in front of the conference room. Fugil and the Lords had already left from this place.

"No——. I just, a bit dizzy....."

From what Lisha told him, it seemed that right after Lux exchanged words with Fugil, he got into a daze and stood stock still.

He already couldn't remember the words from just now.

But, the pain of the wound in his heart being deeply gouged was remaining.

"Rather than that, this is troubling huh. That despicable woman called Rosa or something, now it turned into a fight with her."

Lisha's words returned Lux's focus at the matter that was told at the end of the summit.

With a somewhat apologetic expression, Celis returned to Lux and Lisha's side.

"Forgive me. I willfully nominated myself just now. By all rights, I should work out a plan to avoid that very mock battle itself but——"

"......Well, perhaps that's so but, at that situation, it would be difficult to overturn the flow from that result no matter what we did."

Lisha was also agreeing while whispering that with a slightly troubled look.

"But, can you really win? That Witch of Steel whatever, I heard that she is Heiburg's trump card you know? It seems that fellow's Divine Drag-Ride is called Gorynych, but that's all that I heard."

The mercilessness that caused the death of five people in the mock battle at her own country, and her strength.

They understood that Rosa was a dangerous Drag-Knight.

"It's all right. I don't know the ability of the Divine Drag-Ride she has, but I swear I will do everything within my ability and win. Ra, rather than that, why did even Lux nominated yourself?"

After Celis declared resolutely, she turned a flustered gaze toward Lux.

"Forgive me. I was worried for Celis-senpai, that I couldn't just stay quiet without doing anything myself."

"Lux....."

After Lux said that awkwardly, Celis's cheeks blushed.

But, she hurriedly shook her head left and right before slowly averting her eyes from Lux.

"Tha, that, I will accept only your feeling! I, it will be alright if it's me! I can properly take responsibility for my own decision! Well then!"

Celis said only that before she left from being near Lux with rapid footsteps.

Without even any time for Lux to stop her, her back was gone from his view.

"What's with that Celis. Somehow it feels like she isn't herself though——?"

"Yes. I wonder, if I did something.....?"

—

Slightly behind Lux and Lisha who were tilting their head in puzzlement, two girls were sighing.

"What's with these slow people..... It's us who are watching who get astounded. Don't they notice anything?"

The one who was at her wits' end like that was the youngest Seven Dragon Paladins, Mel Gizalut.

Due to the recoil from using the secret medicine—Elixir at the previous battle, she was unable to wear Drag-Ride for a while.



Perhaps because of that, she was relatively quiet at the meeting this time.

"Can you please don't say that? Though I also understand your reaction really well."

Krulcifer beside her also made a wry smile looking troubled and denied what Mel said.

Since the incident at Ymir Theocracy before this, the two of them became more able to speak openly to each other without reservation than before. Their relationship became amiable.

"More importantly Krulcifer. What's going on with you and Onii-chan? You finished confessing properly to him right? You said that you want to become his real fiancée."

"I intend to convey it to Lux-kun in roundabout way, but as you can see Lux-kun is slow like that. It won't go well unless I make him conscious of it a bit more."

"You said that, but actually you are scared to get rejected right?"

"....."

For a moment Krulcifer fell silent when Mel pointed out with a devilish smile.

But, after slightly pondering in hesitation, she quietly muttered before long.

"Actually. I was once going to propose for us to have a formal relationship already. It was right at the day we went back to the new kingdom after that incident that happened at your place."

"What, so you were rejected just as I thought. I wonder if Onii-chan prefer a girl with larger breast?"

"Listen to the story until the end. And then, I went to his little sister Airi-chan to tell her about that, but I received an unexpected reply from her.

According to her, it's impossible for the current Lux-kun to become anyone's lover—she said."

"What do you mean?"

Mel made a dubious face toward Krulcifer who suddenly smiled.

"Did that little sister lied so that her Onii-chan wouldn't get taken away, or something?"

"That's also possible, but the answer is different. He is the survivor of the old empire's imperial family that imposed misgovernment—, he is burdened with large amount of debt and the status of criminal in the new kingdom. In the first place the country won't even recognize his right to marry in his current situation."

"No way!?! But! From what you told me, if I remember right Onii-chan is——"

Mel was shocked and flared up at Krulcifer.

Mel also knew about the matter of how the old empire was destroyed by Lux himself who was a former prince, and how he was the Black Hero who became the key figure of the new kingdom.

She wondered if it was all right for the person who fought in order to save the country to be burdened by such shackle.

"Yes, it's a troubling story. But, he himself believed that in such condition he has no qualification to get into relationship with anyone. It seems that he refused all confession that he got several times when he was doing chores in the past."

"That's how it is, so one day I will have no choice but to support the unmarried Nii-san. It's really a troubling matter but—it can't be helped, he is my only family left after all.'

Krulcifer laughed at such answer from Airi, but at that time she thought that this girl might be actually serious in a sense.

"Then, that means Lux-oniichan absolutely cannot become happy? Even though he had fought many times, and saved new kingdom from danger by risking his life——"

When Mel casted her eyes down with a pensive expression, Krulcifer silently shook her head.

"No, most likely if it's the current Lux-kun, he should be able to ask to have that criminal collar removed. In fact, the consuls of the new kingdom once tried to do that to sell favor to him instead."

"Then, why.....?"

Lux was deliberately keeping hold of his position as criminal?

Krulcifer told the bewildered Mel the answer.

"That's why, it depend on his own feeling. Lux-kun is still thinking that it's only natural for him to be a criminal. He is regretting that he was unable to settle his own ideal that tried to change the old empire."

That was why he resolved himself to be involved once more with the country called new kingdom as a Seven Dragon Paladins and fought.

Fugil Arcadia, the man who betrayed Lux and destroyed the empire's imperial family and army.

The mystery of the clan of Lord, the imperial family of Holy Arcadia Empire. Lux was trying to face his past along with those two things, to make sure of the truth of what happened at that day——of what he tried to do.

"How should I say it, he is too serious.....but that's also not really it. It's as though, he is cursed."

"Perhaps that is so."

The reason why Lux didn't even hesitate to risk his life in earnestly heading toward his ideal.

How he felt he was 'saved' by getting reduced into the livelihood of doing chores.

In a glance, it looked as though he was being possessed by something.

But,

"But, if that's actually the case, then I wish to save him from that curse. If the time comes that Lux himself believe from his heart that it's fine to take off that criminal collar—I intend to convey my feeling to him clearly at that time."

She still couldn't make the last push, the confession to make it all clear.

Because until Lux settled his own feeling, the other girls also couldn't take advantage of it.

But, until they reached that point, she was intending to firmly grasp Lux's heart using the present time.

"This is really interesting. To think that I'll be able to see you acting like this——"

"Yes, now you are glad that I became the aide for Ymir right?"

Krulcifer responded with a cool smile even toward Mel's teasing.

When Pope Nias returned after finishing the discussion with the leaders' representatives, they began light briefing session as Ymir Theocracy's representatives.

Part 2

"This is strange. Something is odd. Even though I thought that I was finally able to do what I ought to do just now, why——"

Inside the Academy's ground that was dyed red by the setting sun.

Perhaps because it was the day before the campus festival, there were a lot of students putting their preparation in order steadily—or rather, they were spending all their time and energy to prepare each of their stall or event until the very last minute.

Even among them, Celis was staring at that sight from afar by herself.

'——lacking in focus.'

The words of her father Dist were still echoing inside her ears.

Trusting Lux and merely leaving everything to a boy who was her junior were two completely different things.

Even though she was taking the position of an aide of Seven Dragon Paladins in order to protect him, but she was really lacking in focus.

That was why she accepted the provocation of Rosa Granhide in the summit just now.

The battle would be carried out at the end of the campus festival that would be held for a period of two days—in the practice ground.

But——, there would be no spectator watching the fight from among the students as well as guest from outside.

Because there would also be the management of the campus festival, and in the unlikely chance that Dragon Marauder attacked, having spectators would only invite further chaos.

That matter itself wasn't a problem.

In order to save the new kingdom, this method was inevitable, and she thought that she couldn't allow this to also become a burden for Lisha and Lux.

"And yet—Lux is trying to help me again. Even though I thought that it will be fine if I can fight alone just for this time."

But, even so she felt happy for his consideration.

And then, the moment the summit was over, her face suddenly became completely heated.

"Perhaps, it's better if I distant myself a bit from Lux. If not, it feels I will depend on his good will again."

Celis muttered that to herself in a place where there was no one.

But, at that timing, suddenly there was a sound coming from a cover. Celis reflexively turned around.

"You are——?"

"My? You are sharp as usual. It's different from what I heard."

The one who said that while appearing from hiding was Kirihome Yoruka.

She wasn't wearing that black foreign outfit with high exposure rate, but the uniform of the Academy.

She was staring at Celis with a bewitching smile that looked beautiful but would make anyone who saw it to feel vaguely uneasy.

"How unusual. For you to appear personally in front of me like this."

Yoruka was a girl with incomprehensible way of thinking even from Celis's point of view, but only her loyalty toward Lux that was certain.

"Yes. It's a matter that Aruji-sama asked of me. It seems that you are acting somewhat odd, so he asked me to check up on you while I'm in the middle of patrolling."

"—Eh?"

Lux was concerned about him.

Just from hearing that name briefly, a disturbance ran through her once more.

But, this time she was able to suppress the throbbing of her heart somehow after taking a deep breath.

"I'm thankful for Lux's consideration. But, as you can see I'm all right, so can I ask you to tell him that there is no need for worry?"

"Is it—really true?"

"What, do you mean by that?"

Celis threw a genuine question to Yoruka.

"Even though I look like this, I am sensitive to people's emotion. This violet eye—the sense that was strengthened by Baptism can accurately read the wavelength of consciousness from the other party's expression and gesture."

Yoruka's lips lightly relaxed and she pointed at her own left eye.

Purple iris shining mysteriously could be seen there.

"Are you intending to say that I am lying?"

"No. It's not like I can read your heart after all."

Yoruka replied immediately with an artificial pleasant smile that looked bright.

"....."

Celis thought that this girl was tough to face as usual.

It wasn't that she hated her, but she didn't understand how she should talk with her.

"By the way Celis-san, most recently it seemed that Krulcifer-san tried to propose Aruji-sama to go out with her—do you know about that?"

"Wha-.....!? Wha, what are you saying so suddenly!? You are——"

"Well, I only happened to overhear of it just now, so please don't pay it any mind. And then how about Celis-san?"

"Wh, why are you asking me that!? Regarding the matter of love, i, it's something that is still unrelated with me."

"That is unfortunate to hear. I hoped that you too would bear Aruji-sama's child as one of his concubines by all means but—. More importantly, you will fight against one of the Seven Dragon Paladins correct? Let's see, if my memory serves me right, it seems the opponent is called the Witch of Steel or something like that."

"Is she a formidable enemy even from the view point of a Drag-Knight of your level?"

When she lightly opened hostilities with Rosa at the front gate of the Academy, she managed to estimate her ability in general.

Certainly she was an uncommonly strong person, but Celis thought if it was her current self she would be able to fight her more than equally but—.

But, Yoruka didn't answer that question and only returned a smile filled with deep implication.

"Let's see. How should I explain it? In case I and you—try to kill each other in downtown, which one of us do you believe will win?"

"That's——"

It was only her guess, but it felt like the winner would be Yoruka.

Celis herself didn't want to admit so easily that she was inferior against a first year girl, but in the sense of personal combat skill, this girl called Yoruka possessed ability at the same level with Lux.

"By the way, the capability between me and you is about equal—that's what I'm thinking. Regardless of that, in a real battle I will be the winner. In other words, that's how it is."

"....."

Their strength was about equal, but in real battle Yoruka would be in advantage.

Celis pondered the meaning of that and she immediately drew out the answer.

"I see. You mean that I am weak against ambush or surprise attack, or perhaps against foul play, is that it? If that's the case——"

"Completely wrong. What are you saying?"

Yoruka once more replied immediately with a smile that contained no ill will, interrupting Celis.

"....."

Yoruka faced Celis who was making a conflicted face and calmly began to resume their talk.

"Things like ambush, surprise attack, or foul play won't work against you. It's something more fundamental than such things. For example you, whether it's against ally or enemy, you will fight in the way to not kill human as much as possible."

"——"

Celis was taken by surprise at what Yoruka pointed out so casually.

"You don't have the resolve to bring death to the enemy when the time come—is not what I mean. However even after omitting that, you possess

the minimum consideration for other. You are tied by moral."

"But, that's——"

"Yes, it's something that is par for the course. Rather, it's me who is broken. I who don't have a human heart won't hesitate in such thing. However in real battle, that slight difference in mentality will become a gap. Such thing can also be said to that Witch of Steel."

"She——a member of Seven Dragon Paladins, Rosa Granhide won't balk to involve the surrounding people, and bring death to enemy or ally. Is that what you are saying?"

Celis finally understood the reason of Yoruka's warning.

Most likely it would be difficult for her to win if she didn't resolve herself once more.

"Perhaps in a sense she might be nastier than me. After all before talking about not balking, no, in the first place, that figure of hers could it be——let's stop. From here it will become only my individual conjecture after all."

Unusually Yoruka herself was talking ambiguously.

Celis put her feeling in order once more and said her thanks to Yoruka.

"My thanks for your consideration. I will come into the skill demonstration battle against her with meticulous vigilance."

"I hope so. It's forbidden in the rule, but if there is danger to Aruji-sama's safety then I intend to barge in, so please fight bravely with that in mind. Well then——"

Was she coming here to expressly give advice so that Celis wouldn't be defeated?

That motive which was just like Yoruka relieved Celis instead.

After saying only that, Yoruka left like a smoke.

Celis took a deep breath beside the trees behind the school where there wasn't anyone and lifted her face.

"I won't allow Lux to be burdened. This time I will win with my own strength without relying on him."

That was exactly the mission that should be accomplished by her who was the daughter of one of the four great nobles.

Celis believed that this was the answer toward the reprimand 'Lacking in focus——' that her father Dist said to her.

"If I can do that, surely—I will be able to fight together with Lux once more."

Celis stared at the setting sun and made an oath.

After immersing herself in the air of the campus festival like that for a while, a voice came from afar.

"Ooooi Celis. Help us out over here! It feels like the festival tomorrow is going to be busy."

The three members of Triad who were led by Sharis were calling at her while waving their hand.

Sharis's hand was wrapped with bandage, but it didn't look like she was particularly hindered by it.

A relieved smile emerged on Celis's face as though the worrying she did by herself was just a lie.

(As I thought, the academy is a good thing.....)

Celis was thinking that while walking slowly toward the girls.

Chapter 3 – Campus Festival, Start

Part 1

"—Everyone in Academy, is your preparation finished? You must be tired from the strict training everyday. But—this is our springtime that only comes once in our life. Even military cadet need relaxation isn't that right? Then, let's have great fun and get fired up together with the people of Cross Field today!"

‘WAAAAaAH!’ Loud cheers rose from the student at the same time when Relie’s greeting ended.

Countless stalls and numerous events that were held on set up stages.

Schedules and maps were posted in a big way everywhere.

—

"The ingredient is more insufficient than planned! Don't worry about permission or what not, just bring it from the dining hall's warehouse!"

"Selling back the admission ticket is forbidden!Wait, there is forgeries in circulation already you say!?"

"This year there is illegal trespasser coming out from underground you know!? Contact the vigilance committee and Triad right away!"

—

Like that, the noble young ladies were running around flurriedly and high pitched voices thundered from everywhere.

Even though there was still one more hour until the public guest came in, a chaotic situation already came into play.

"How should I say it, I heard the rumor but....., this is amazing."

"I too am a first year student so this is the first time I see it but—, as I thought headmaster is strange isn't she....."

Lux was smiling wryly while his little sister Airi was also whispering in blank amazement.

The two were overwhelmed by the enthusiasm of the first campus festival they participated in.

Airi was scheduled to work as librarian at the library, but it seemed that her preparation had finished.

And so, at the very least for now before the event was started.....like that, she was together with Lux, but—.

"By the way, what kind of punishment game Nii-san is getting?"

Airi said a cruel thing after seeing her brother's figure standing beside her.

A white cloth was hanging from Lux's shoulder, there was the words 'Odd Jobs Specialist, will do anything. ☆1 time 1 ticket☆' written on it.

"No, I also don't really get it though....."

The moment he replied like that with a complex expression, his back was hit *pofuh*.

"Morniiiing! Lux-chi, are you weeell!? Are you pleased with my plan?"

The one who came while spreading around an innocent smile was one of the Triad who was his classmate, Tillfur.

"Wait, just what's this!? Even though you were saying that you will choose the event that I'll participate at for me!?"

Certainly he heard that yesterday, and yet for some reason this morning he was suddenly entrusted with this bizarre plan.

"You don't like it? Buuut, Lux-chi actually should thank me tearfully for this you know?"

When Lux questioned her about this matter, Tillfur sent him an impish smile.

"Eh.....?"

"Because Lux-chi didn't choose what event you will participate in at the start, the scramble behind the scene was absurdly fierce just so you know. After all everyone was saying 'He will come to our place' and there was no control at all. It's also fine to decide it by drawing lottery, but everyone else will be dissatisfied using that way."

"Yes. The situation was also similar among us first year."

Unnoticed Noct had also arrived.

The two Triad members were wearing arm band that was embroidered with the writing 'Campus Festival Vigilance Committee Management'.

It seemed it was a special title for this day.


"Thanks to that everyone in the class later wouldn't stop demanding Airi to influence her Onii-san to participate in their project."

".....That's right. Thanks to that I was tired rejecting all of them. I wasn't resented by my classmates after that is surely because of my everyday's good conduct."

Airi also added in with sarcasm for some reason.

At that timing even Sharis arrived and tapped *pon* Lux's shoulder.

"In addition, Lux-kun is busy recently, that you tend to postpone the individual request from the students. If you don't disperse their frustration at time like this in this way, their dissatisfaction will explode and you will get assaulted you know?"

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"A, assaulted.....?"

"Fufufu. Oho, you don't notice? —Something, like this."

When Lux was looking perplexed, Sharis pulled Lux's head and sandwiched it under her arm.

The elasticity of the moderately big breast hit Lux's face. Lux's face spontaneously turned red.

"Wha-!? What are you doing Sharis-san!?"

"What, this is just a bit of warning from me as vigilance committee member. Please be careful during this campus festival."

It seemed that Sharis herself was also embarrassed, she laughed to hide her embarrassment.

The remaining others who were watching that were sending her an exasperated gaze.

"It's Sharis-san who is assaulting Nii-san though."

"Yes. This is an unreliable vigilance committee captain."

Getting retorted by two first year students, Sharis cleared her throat *cough* once.

"Wai-, how long you are going to hold Lux-chi like that!?"

Tillfur tore Lux away from her at that opening and they returned back to the topic.

"Well, so 'cause of that Lux-chi, you go around everywhere in the festival okay? If a girl requests you at the middle bringing ticket, help them out in their stall or event. Ah, but, it will be no good if you stay for too long in one place you know?"

Like that they taught Lux the content of the work he should do.

In the end it was the usual odd jobs, but it was more that he was for the exclusive use of the students in the campus festival.

"Till~! Come over here a bit! There is incident over thereee!"

While Lux was thinking of that, a female student's voice came from the direction of the courtyard.

"Kay, I'm going there nooow. Then Lux-chi, have fun in the festival okay."

Tillfur who was called concluded the talk like that toward Lux.

"Got it. I'm not really confident but.....I'll try to do my best."

"Yup. If you are troubled, call out to us. Or rather, we are going to come checking how you are doing occasionally."

"Yes. The outsider guest will also enter soon, so we too have to get going soon."

"Right. By the way, Sharis-san's injury——"

The short dispute with Rosa Granhide that he heard the rumor about.

Lux muttered when he saw the arm that was wrapped in bandage, but Sharis smiled refreshingly.

"Just this much is nothing for me. More importantly, you take care of Celis in that skill demonstration battle."

"——Yes. Sharis-san too, be careful."

Lux also responded with a smile and at the end he was left alone with only Airi.

"Then, I'll also go. It's unrelated with Nii-san but, my break time will be at the afternoon."

"Ah, right, I get it don't worry."

Her tone was curt, but for her to expressly tell him like that must meant 'I want you to come' without doubt.

Lux interpreted the message from his little sister who was like that while deciding that for the time being he would look around at the campus festival after this.

".....Also, that's, I think that Nii-san will be busy but, please at least have fun even if just for today."

Airi averted her face and said that with a small voice. Lux abruptly leaked out a smile at her consideration.

"Thank you. Airi too, do your best."

Airi left after telling him that. Lux then looked at a map and started walking.

There were a lot of events from the school building until facilities like practice ground and the like, but he wondered where he should start from.

"As I thought perhaps I should begin from Lisha-sama's place? I'm also worried about the Drag-Ride——"

"Lux-senpai! Can I ask a request!? Please help at our stall!"

While he was mumbling to himself, five first year girls immediately called out to him from the courtyard.

It seemed that what the Triad told him also wasn't really an exaggerated story.

It felt like this would become an unexpectedly hard schedule.

".....Err, I won't be able to stay for long but, if all of you are okay with that then.....?"

"Certainly, please!"

The girls nodded at Lux's reply and they lightly exchanged high five with each other.

Lux smiled wryly at their high spirits that were really unlike young ladies from noble family and he thought.

(—But, it's fine if I can make everyone happy I think.)

Recently he often went to foreign country, so Lux felt happy that he was requested in the Academy.

(Yosh. It has been a long time, I'll do my best displaying my odd job skills that has been trained in these five years.)

Lux put his spirit into it and followed the guidance of his juniors.

Part 2

It wasn't like there wasn't any stall on the open ground of the Academy, but there was a lot more inside the campus building.

From first floor until third floor, various decorations were applied at each class. The place was crowded just like a small town.

There was a room that was extravagantly decorated even among all of them.

In that room that had red carpet spread out and smooth gleaming furniture and implements put inside, Lux was immediately helping out with the stall.

"Eerr—, many thanks Ojou-sama. Wha, what would be your order?"

"Right. Cookie and black tea, I'll leave the choice to you. After all I have a palate that can eat anything."

The one who was staring at Lux with a gaze that was filled with suggestiveness was Magialca of Seven Dragon Paladins.

The company president who was wearing showy red cloak was relaxing on a sofa enjoyably.

In addition beside her was the big sister of his very close childhood friend, Relie sitting there.

"That appearance look really good on you Lux-kun. What do you think? When you graduate from Academy, won't you try to formally work in my place as secretary?"

"No, that's a bit....."

"That's right, Lux-kun will live together with Phi, so it can't be helped."

"That's not it, just what in the world this refreshment booth is!?"

Lux yelled toward the two guests in bewilderment.

The current Lux wasn't wearing the attire of a waiter, but a butler outfit with black color as base for some reason.

After he received the request, he was taken by the girls into a café that was named 'Butler Mansion'.

Lux heard that it was 'work for man' and jumped to a hasty conclusion that it would surely be a physical labor, but he never imagined that he himself would be working as a café staff.

Magialca and Relie came as his first customer.

"Or rather, dressing as butler in the academy for girls is——"

Even though it was an exception for Lux who was a male to be enrolled, but to think they would attempt this kind of refreshment booth.

But, Relie jested as though she wasn't concerned about it at all.

"My. Perhaps it's hard for a boy like Lux-kun to understand, but it's exactly because this is a girl academy that this kind of thing is unexpectedly demanded you know? Besides, this time there are also special guests participating."

At the neighboring space, there were two young men standing disguised in similar butler attire.

The Seven Dragon Paladins of Wanheim Principality Greifer, and his aide Coral who were staying here during the campus festival.

It was shocking that they were helping at this refreshment booth, but unexpectedly the attire suited the two really well.

Greifer gave bad and rough impression, but that instead became an interesting mismatch, while Coral was the very definition of cute young man, so it also felt like he would be popular.

"How nice, the three of them are really nicee.....if Lux-kun will stay here until the end, we will be able to make a bet of who will be the most popular but——"

"Last year we had Sharis-senpai to dress in male outfit but, real boy is also not bad isn't it..... Or rather, right now it's heating up the most! Inside me that is!"

At the back of the refreshment booth, the girls who were the organizer were yelling without hiding their exaltation.

"Oi Coral. Why is it me who came for the summit has to dress like this yeah?"

The one who was making the most fed-up looking face was Greifer as expected.

He whose personality was originally peevish seemed to be led bit by bit by his aide Coral somehow and got roped into this.

"You are free anyway right? Besides Milmiette-sama also told you to cooperate with the festival, right?"

"Guh, I'm not gonna forget this....."

Greifer who was told off by Coral was serving the customers with extremely reluctant face.

"Oi you bunches of Ojou-sama, order quickly! Go home right away after you finished eating."

He was acting unbecomingly as a butler, but unexpectedly it was accepted as interesting.

Lux had noticed it when he went to Wanheim Principality, but Greifer was actually very good at looking out for other people despite his appearance, so perhaps he was unexpectedly suited for a butler role. He couldn't say that to the person himself though.

"Rather than that, thanks for your hard work Lux-kun. Sorry that I couldn't help you at the conference because of my position then."


While Lux was thinking of such things, Coral who was wearing similar butler attire while doing waiter work called out to him with an apologetic look.

What Coral meant by help at the conference must be referring to the announcement of skill demonstration battle where the prize would be the right to investigate the Ruin—Babel at the new kingdom.

But, the other countries also had their own circumstances. They were staying vigilant against the aim of the Lords and didn't wish to expose their hand.

As expected, it would be too harsh to expect Coral who was only an aide in the end to speak up at that time.

"No, don't worry about it. But, is it okay for you two to work here? Coral and Greifer originally should be honored guest though——"

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"No. There is no academy festival like this in Wanheim Principality, so I'm happy to be asked to blend in.I can also see Greifer dressed like that."

Coral chuckled mischievously and gazed at his working comrade.

In contrast Greifer heard that while staring this way with displeased expression.

"Oi! You guys don't have idle talk like that! There is long line until outside waiting!"

It was a refreshment booth where handsome boys dressed as butler would be serving the young ladies.

It seemed that rumor was spread and before they noticed many guests came rushing.

(It feels like the people in the queue are all this academy's students though—)

Even though everyone was basically lady from good place, from Lux's view point this was a sight that he couldn't really understand.

But, it seemed that it was an established practice that this kind of booth was popular.

"Ahaha, we got scolded. Then Lux-kun. Let's do our best."

Coral muttered that with a gentle smile and returned to his work in hurry.

There were three seats inside the room—, Lux returned to the table he was in charge of.

It seemed that there was also a hidden menu of the butler giving service of feeding the customer cookie from what he was told.

(Really, just what is with this shop.....)

While Lux was serving Magialca with bafflement, her eyes suddenly sparkled bewitchingly. She suddenly leaned on the chest of Lux who was sitting on the sofa beside her.

"Hmm. Is alcohol used in this cookie? I'm a bit drunk. Can you nurse me for a bit?"

"Wai-, please don't suddenly hug like this!? Also please don't stroke my thigh!"

At the outside she was a petite girl that was about the same like Lisha, but her hand manner and mature gesture gave him the impression of an older woman about the same age with Relie.

Her trained lithe body stuck close on him. She was hugging him while her finger crawled on his chest.

The organizers of the booth who saw that approached them in panic.

‘Thank god. I’m saved’—Lux thought, but.

"Dear guest. There will be additional charge for special option of lap pillow though?"

"Why is the hidden menu that I didn’t know is rapidly increasing-!?"

And then why was everyone competing to earn money despite being a rich person already he wondered.

The moment Lux yelled reflexively, Headmaster Relie unexpectedly interrupted.

"Sorry Magialca. I got scolded by the public moral committee member who passed through just now. —I need to stop you here in my position."

"Public moral committee.....member?"

When Lux tilted his head, Relie smiled wryly while looking toward the corridor.

"My bad but, I’m not allowed to talk due to the person’s wish. That girl—she is really awkward."

".....?"

Lux was pondering for a while "Who could it be....." hearing Relie’s words that were filled with significance.

But, he was worked to death with work as waiter and he was unable to reach the answer at that place.

—

Part 3

The thirty minutes work ended in the blink of eye and Lux left the refreshment booth.

But right after that he was caught by other girls who were lying in wait, and he was brought to a stage that was built in the courtyard.

He was requested to do the prince role in one of the play there.

"Wait a second!? That role sounds really important, how can you entrust it to me who only just came!?"

Although Lux objected, "Then, want to try the princess role?" he yielded against the devilish haggling and acted his role very stiffly.

"Oi Lux! When are you going to come at my place!? Like this I cannot do the performance using the Drag-Ride I created!"

After that, he was called by Lisha who came after being unable to be patient, and he headed to the atelier of Drag-Ride.

Unexpectedly the exhibition room was popular among males, perhaps because it was a rare chance for the people in the Cross Field to look at Drag-Ride from nearby.

Furthermore after that they headed to an open space at the courtyard and held a performance.

When the Drag-Ride that Lisha created in the past, Armed Wyvern, a Drag-Ride that was moved without anyone wearing the armor was showed, the surrounding was greatly stirred, but,

"Wait a second, I only need to catch this? Even without specially waiting for me this....."

"Wha, what are you saying!? That's, if you who know about my accomplishment doesn't accompany me, I won't be able to operate it with

peace of mind right....."

The moment they came down from the stage, Lisha entangled her fingers shyly while saying that. That gesture of hers left an impression.

"Then, can I ask Lux-kun to participate over here too?"

Next, Krulcifer who was watching that invited him, and he was led away to the practice ground that was modified into a dance hall.

The surrounding was covered with black curtain, and the place was illuminated by chandelier. Girls wearing dazzling dress were dancing there.

Of course guest who didn't prepare anything could also join without changing outfit, but it seemed that Krulcifer refused the invitation of men who came as guest and waited for Lux.

"Err Krulcifer-san. Actually, isn't it better to dance with guest from Cross Field?"

"That might be so. But, it looks like there are also a lot of people who want to dance with Lux-kun, so I think it's better if you practice for a little first."

Lux smiled wryly at Krulcifer's forceful argument while dancing with her.

It was a dance that was common in new kingdom with simple choreography, but Krulcifer was leading him skillfully, so Lux too could do it easily.

And then, the girl who was wearing pure white dress like snow flower was breathtakingly beautiful like always.

"I'll accompany you next, so take the lead properly okay, Onii-chan."

Ymir Theocracy's Seven Dragon Paladins, Mel Gizalut was also there. The girl was also participating in the dance.

It was fun to dance with two beautiful girls alternately, but the jealous gaze from the male guests hurt. He felt just a bit awkward.

"Chih! That damn kid, even though he was already enrolling into Academy everyday alone, showing off like that..... I was rejected by both of them. Even though I also want to dance with beauty from Ymir hereeee!"

"Guy with nice face has it good huh. That cursed Lux——"

"You're right, let's make him bungle a bit yeah? Don't worry, it won't be as far as causing injury."

The majority of the outsider guests didn't pay it any mind, but among them three men with bad personality were having such discussion in the shadow.

Perhaps because of his habitual odd jobs, Lux's evaluation in Cross Field was good, but a man's jealousy and envy were a different story.

"Yosh, then let's do it on the stage. We're gonna ask other suitable students to dance.....and then"

"Then, please let me act as your partner."

There—a tall girl with blonde hair wearing beautiful dress appeared in front of them.

Her face couldn't be seen because of a white mask covering the area around her eyes, perhaps because it was a part of the outfit. But seeing her voluptuous breasts and tight waist line, the men gulped audibly.

"Ye, yeah....., ta, take care of us, miss."

(What's this—if I can dance with such good woman, then this isn't too bad.)

Thinking that, the man's grudge toward Lux decreased slightly, but his two comrades glared at him, so as expected he would still continue with the plan.

The strategy was to get on the same stage, then when Lux was dancing right beside him, he would step on his foot and made him stumbled a bit——.

The moment he was going to execute it with an unnatural step, the hand in white glove that he was holding moved suddenly.

"Obstruction is not permitted."

".....Wha-!? Ouch ouch ouch-!"

That moment when his foot moved to reach toward Lux, his hand was twisted in a jerk.

The man jumped high from the pain and fainted in agony.

The surrounding saw it as the man mistaking his dance and got his arm twisted.

"Fuu....., that was dangerous."

The masked girl who finished the dance sighed in relieve and got down from the stage.

Lux too safely finished his dance with Mel even while getting bothered by what happened at the side.

"Onii-chan is more skilled than I thought just now. Next time you come to Ymir Theocracy, I won't mind to be your partner again you know?"

As always, she appeared mature for her age even though this girl was four years younger than him, but oddly she looked cute even with that. That must be her charm.

"Ahaha, take care of me at that time. But, the voice just now——?"

"Yes, I also heard something familiar."

Krulcifer also agreed with Lux's mutter and she turned her face.

The masked girl who was dancing nearby just now jumped in surprise when the talk was suddenly directed at her.

".....N, no-!? I, I'm not anyone suspicious or anything!"

"No one is saying anything like that though....."

The retort that Mel spoke with a serious face caused the masked girl to be even more panicked.

"I, I have an urgent business so excuse me!"

She somehow said only that and left swiftly.

"What is, just now.....?"

Mel's expression was slightly baffled. Lux also agreed with awkward look.

"Could it be? Krulcifer-san."

".....Yes, I think so. I don't know what she is thinking but—she is formidable."

"Eh.....?"

Lux tilted his head in puzzlement hearing Krulcifer's mutter that was filled with significance.

"It's fine if you don't think it too deeply Lux-kun. Then, how about now we look around at the next event with just the two of us?"

Krulcifer sweetly whispered into Lux's ear. His heart spontaneously skipped a beat.

The moment he was lost whether to accept her invitation or not, a loud voice came from behind.

"Krulcifer-san! It's your turn next to be receptionist for the dance hall!"

The one who bellowed angrily was a third year girl who was also member of Syvalles.

If Krulcifer monopolized Lux, jealousy would also come from the female camp, something like that.

"Haa.....it's unfortunate. Then, let's meet again later."

"Ah, ri, right. Krulcifer-san and Mel too, do your best."

Lux was relieved inside his heart while waving his hand and parting from the girls.

After that, he went around the Academy ground for a while by himself.

He helped with magic trick performance, then he nursed and guided a guest who got anemia, and so on. He performed several requests that came from both students and the citizens.

At first he was worried what would happen, but perhaps thanks to him having the understanding of geography and environment of the wide Academy ground from his daily odd jobs, he was unexpectedly able to carry out his 'odd job specialist' role nicely.

—And then, one hour later.

"Fuu, that took a lot of time....."

After receiving sandwich and skewered meat from students who were doing food stand and had lunch, Lux headed to the library to check on Airi.

He found the figure of his little sister working as librarian at the library—the History Exhibition program.

"Yes. The material over here is something from the era of old empire. The Drag-Ride was first excavated in the Ruin....."

And so on, she was answering the question from visitor smoothly.

Airi herself was a royalty of the old empire, and she still also had the collar of criminal on her neck, and yet her dignified behavior was just as expected from her.

"Airi-chan. Where is the material for ancient writing again? A guest who also want to look at them is—"

"Yes. Enter straight and look at the right bookshelf at the end. Please be careful at where you step. Ah, please don't bring that candle inside. No fire is

permitted inside after all."

She was a first year and this was her first campus festival and her first time looking after visitor. In spite of that it seemed that the other students were also relying on her.

Her social disposition and her ability to navigate the society were skilled, added with her ability to decipher ancient document too, she possessed extremely excellent skill as a civil official.

(Airi too has become splendid huh.....)

When Lux was watching that from afar, Airi suddenly looked his way and she immediately approached him.

"Nii-san, why are you looking at me with that stupid grin since just now? Speaking clearly, you look disgusting."

"That's cruel-.....!?"

Even though he was coming here to check on her situation wondering if she was troubled by something.

Also, even though he was only being happy at his little sister's growth.

"Nii-san is standing out no matter where you are, so if you have business please talk to me. I'll be teased by everyone later if you are like this."

While he was thinking like that, Airi's cheeks puffed up a bit and she muttered with reproachful gaze.

It seemed she was embarrassed that the other students noticed Lux was watching over her like a parent.

"I, It's not like I was acting sneaky, I didn't want to become a bother for Airi."

"Even though you are just Nii-san, please don't fuss at me strangely like that. After all, I absolutely won't think of Nii-san as nuisance....."

Airi muttered the latter half of her sentence with a small voice that Lux couldn't catch.

At that time when Lux was worried of Airi's state, a presence moved from the corridor deeper inside.

"Waah!?"

A small child was running and fell before bumping onto bookshelves.

"......Watch out-!?"

When the bookshelves almost fell from the backlash, Lux pushed away the kid with paper-thin difference.

There, the instant the bookshelves were going to fall—, Lux's body floated gently within someone's arms.

"Eh.....?"

Right after he blinked in surprise, the old bookshelves fell noisily behind him.

"It's fine and all to be energetic, but it's no good if you aren't careful you know?"

"I, I'm sorry. Onee-chan."

Such voice could be heard suddenly, then right after that,

"—Then, it looks like Lux is also save, I'll take my leave."

The girl's voice only left those words before the voice was getting distant.

"Just now, could it be—?"

"It was dark so I couldn't see well but, most likely....."

The instantaneous force and leg strength that instantly closed the distance from afar.

Furthermore the arm strength that could easily lift up Lux's body was something characteristic of that girl.

And then, that voice he heard for a moment when she left, he thought that it was Celis's voice but—.

"But if that's the case, why did she leave right away?"

Lux tilted his head in puzzlement, but he didn't know the answer.

"Did you do something, Nii-san?"

"No, I don't have any recollection doing strange thing to her though....."

Of course, the possibility that he made her angry without realizing it wasn't zero.

But, it would be unnatural if that was the case, because she had saved him just now.

"Let's ask her about it later. More importantly, right now I have a request for Nii-san to receive."

Airi sighed lightly, then she smiled at Lux.

"Err, don't tell me....."

"Yes. Please tidy this up."

"I know it....."

The child was saved from the falling bookshelves, but the spilled books were piling up like a mountain.

But, Airi and the other girls had work to guide the visitor, so in the end Lux was suitable to do it.

"Now then—.Eh?"

At that time he was going to start the chore, when he abruptly looked around, a blond hair was peeking out from behind a bookshelf.

The body that was wrapped in uniform was fidgeting fretfully, and something was whispered with a small voice.

"Should I help Lux out.....? But, if I face him right from the front, the me right now will become strange again. As expected, in this situation it will be difficult to help Lux even when there is opportunity——"

"....."

As he thought, it was undoubtedly Celis.

(Or rather, she must be meaning to hide but, the bookshelf is small so she is exposed!)

Celis herself was slender, even so her body figure was nice even among the girl students.

Because of her beautiful honey colored long hair and her large breasts that proclaimed her womanliness, Lux could catch glimpses of her figure.

(.....What should I do, with this?)

It was a situation where it was also hard for Lux to purposefully call out to her.

But, honestly speaking he was bothered.

Why was Celis avoiding him?

And then——why was she helping him despite avoiding him?

(At that conference, I spoke out to give help, perhaps I shouldn't do that.....?)

Lux was thinking of such thing while his hands that were tidying up the books stopped. He then looked slightly to the side.

As though he was going to go away from the bookshelves he was working on.

"Fuu, let's take a bit of rest."

After making faked muttering like that, the air behind him suddenly shook.

Lux used a hand mirror and secretly peeked at his back. There he saw Celis paying attention at Lux's state while diligently returning the book into the bookshelves.

"Err....., what are you doing, Celis-senpai?"

"—Hah!?"

The moment Lux secretly murmured, Celis jumped to the back.

Her back hit the bookshelves from too much force and several books spilled out.

"I, it's nothing! I'm just passing by! Prying is not permitted!"

"Wai-, please wait a second!? Celis-senpa—"

As expected her escape speed was fast with how trained she was.

Lux's voice ended up in vain, her figure vanished from the library in the blink of eye.

"I'm avoided just as I thought? But—"

He also didn't know whether he wasn't hated or not.

But there was also the matter of skill demonstration battle tomorrow, he thought that it couldn't stay like this.

The way to somehow talk to Celis once—.

"Ah, rather than that the time. If I don't go around at the next place....."

When he opened the lid of his pocket watch and confirmed the time, Lux increased his pace and finished tidying up the bookshelves.

He waved his hand to Airi and told her to do her best before leaving to the next place.

—

Part 4

"Fuu....."

After finishing several more requests like helping with cooking, sorting the queue of refreshment booth, and so on, Lux sat down on a curb at the courtyard.

It was finally three o'clock in the afternoon, the first day of the campus festival too was approaching its climax at last.

After that he was able to pass the time without any trouble although it was busy, but in the end he was unable to meet Celis.

But, in exchange he felt a gaze on him.

It was also a cause that heightened Lux's uneasiness.

"Lux-kun, please come to our place next!"

He sat down to rest for a bit, a few girls who happened to catch sight of Lux by chance felt that they were lucky and called out to him.

"Ah, then"

He was a bit tired, but surely it wouldn't be a problem to work a bit more.

The moment Lux was going to accept their request, a girl calmly cut between them smoothly.

"Ah, you are——"

"Phi....., chan?"

The serious faced girl unhesitatingly wedged herself between Lux and the female students.

She was the childhood friend of Lux with trait of light cherry blossom colored hair that looked soft, and expressionless face that looked absentminded—Philuffy Aingram.

She was wearing chic uniform with black as the base from working at a booth selling high class confections, but her cuteness wasn't affected even in that slightly plain outfit.

Rather the largeness of her breast was conspicuously standing out just as much as how few the exposure rate of her attire was.

"Next, is certainly my turn, you know?"

"Eh.....?"

Lux was puzzled hearing Philuffy suddenly saying that.

If he remember correctly, there shouldn't be any promise like that though.

"Isn't that right, Lu-chan?"

"Eh, tha, that's right, I think.....?"

"There is, isn't it?"

"E, exactly!"

Lux spontaneously nodded when he was stared by her fixed gaze *jii-*.

"The, then it can't be helped. Help us out next time okay, Lux-kun."

The other girls seemed to give up after he yielded against Philuffy who was acting forceful in contrast to her absentminded appearance.

"Then, I've made it. So Lu-chan, come over here."

".....Eh, wah!?"

Philuffy's hand gently pulled Lux and he got on his feet.

Then they headed toward one of the stall inside the school building and entered a separate room that was empty.

"—Eh? This place"

"Storeroom.....doubled as, break room. For use of the booths at second floor."

Philuffy pulled a chair as soon as she said that, then she lightly tapped her hand *pon pon* on it.

"Wait, a bit."

After Lux sat there, Philuffy slowly exited the room.

Perhaps the timing was just right at the busy period for any of the stores, because there was almost no other student inside the room.

It seemed the remaining girls inside were also tired, they didn't try to approach him.

"Everyone is full of vigor huh."

When Lux smiled wryly, Philuffy returned.

A mountain of confection was placed on the tray both her hands were carrying.

It wasn't metaphor or anything, it was really a mountain.

"Wait, didn't you have work for me!?"

Even though he completely thought that it was a request for him as 'odd job specialist'.

"Because, I couldn't go together with Lu-chan, to the crepe store."

"A, is, is that so."

He was busy and had no time for outing, so Philuffy must meant this to be the compensation for that.

"This is, the best selling here."

Philuffy said that and put various confections on the cloth that was spread on a few tables joined into one.

Freshly baked apple pie, cherry pie, pancake, and donuts. They were also garnished with a ton of whip cream and fruit jam.

Even though sweet confections was a high class item even in new kingdom, but for this kind of booth to be able to offer them like this was just as expected from an Academy of noble daughters.

"Lu-chan. Open your mouth, aan"

While he was being overwhelmed by that amazing line up of sweets, Philuffy who was sitting beside him leaned forward a lot and held out a sweet that was stabbed by fork toward him.

"Wai-, Phi-chan!? That....., I can eat it by myself!"

Being fed itself was embarrassing, but there was a bigger problem.

Surely Philuffy herself didn't realize it, but when she leaned forward from the side toward him, that—springy voluptuous chest of hers touched him.

But, it seemed Philuffy had no awareness of it, she was sticking even closer to him with her usual serious face.

"It's fine, just do it."

"No but, everyone resting here is also looking at us!"

There were few students who were currently resting inside the break room, but that didn't mean there was none at all.

As expected doing this while attention was focused on them was..... thinking that, Lux attempted his last resistance.

".....The crepe store. I wanted to go."

But, Lux was beaten by Philuffy's dispassionate muttering and he opened his mouth with resolve.

"Nn....."

"Lu-chan. Is it delicious?"

The soft body's sensation, the scent of her hair, and then her voice that came from very near.

Somehow he felt sweetness not just from his tongue, but even from his five senses and the air.

Chew chew The pie's texture was brittle and crumbled inside his mouth, the taste of baked apple and cinnamon's aroma gently slipped out from his nose.

Furthermore the faint mild taste of the velvety cream smoothly wrapped Lux's tongue.

"Delicious.....it's really sweet, but that's not all there is to it."

It wasn't merely sweet, the tastes were mysteriously possessing sense of unity with each other, causing tension to leave Lux's body.

Lux himself didn't hate sweet thing, but to think that he would feel it to be this delicious—.

"I'm glad."

Philuffy gave a faint smile that looked happy and next she also held out a crepe.

It was wrapped in cream and pear syrup. That too was delicious as expected, but its sweetness wasn't that strong.

The cream must be a plain one.

Because of that there was balance with the sweet dough and ingredients.

"Because Mr. crepe seller taught me. Now, I can it together with Lu-chan anytime."

"....."

Lux spontaneously turned speechless hearing what Philuffy said.

She expressly went to the store and asked how to make the flavor, then she even created it while thinking of the preference of the grown up Lux.

His heart was fiercely touched from her straightforward consideration to him.

Somehow, it felt nostalgic.

He could remember Philuffy baking an extraordinarily sweet and large pancake for his sake in the past like it was only yesterday.

Though at that time more than half of the pancake was eaten by Philuffy.

"Thank you, Phi-chan. Here,for you."

Lux too also cut a nearby pancake with a knife, poured a lot of maple syrup on it, and held it out to Philuffy.

"....."

It seemed she didn't expect Lux to respond back without any shyness, she was slightly losing her bearing.

But, before long she opened her small mouth and accepted it.

"Nn, delicious."

At first it was embarrassing to be seen by the students around, but he was touched by her pure feeling and it felt stupid to be concerned by people's gaze.

Lux and Philuffy immersed themselves in the deliciousness of the sweets for a while taking rest.

"Even so, that was a good timing for you to come while I was free. Even though Phi-chan should be really busy too——"

Lux drank a second helping of tea while saying that, then,

"I also didn't know. I was thinking to meet Lu-chan later, but then a masked person told me, that it seemed Lu-chan's work would be finished after a bit longer."

"Eh.....?"

Lux didn't notice because he was focused, but he didn't take rest at all except at lunch.

From what Philuffy said, there was someone somewhere who was paying attention to such Lux.

There was one person who he thought would do such thing.

"That person——could she be"

"She had big breast, tall, and blonde hair. Though she forbid me to speak, telling me 'It's not permitted to tell this to Lux okay'."

"You are exposing everything you know, Phi-chan!? You aren't hiding even a single thing you know!?"

Even though they were inside a break room, Lux instinctively raised his voice and retorted.

In a sense it was just as expected, but the one who was worrying about Lux's body seemed to be Celis.

(As I thought, she is helping me? But——)

When he faced her, she would suddenly cower back and went away somewhere, so he didn't understand.

Though it would be fine if he could go somewhere where he would be able to meet Celis directly.

While he was thinking such thing, the door behind them was suddenly opened loudly.

When he looked back in panic, there the friends of his childhood friend, all three of the Triad were standing.

"Yahoo. Lux-chi, you're well? Aa, you are playing hooky with Philuffy! This must not do!"

First Tillfur spoke teasingly and approached Lux.

Then, the leader Sharis immediately smiled wryly and watched that with folded arms.

"Good grief, it's Tillfur who said that you want to rest because you're tired patrolling right?"

"Yes. Acting like that because you want to play with Lux-san, you aren't honest."

Noct also agreed with what Sharis pointed out. Her eyes were staring reproachfully.

Tillfur who got stabbed in the back by her comrades immediately blushed and got flustered.

"Wai-!? You don't need to say that in front of the person himself do you!? Even though you two agreed with my suggestion, that's cowardly you know!?"

As always the three got along really well. Thinking that, Lux smiled while watching them. There Tillfur cleared her throat *cough* and looked at Lux.

"......Err, it will be time for the events to reach stopping point soon you see. Won't you participate in an event together with us after this? Lux-chi is

this Academy's student too after all. I think playing around sometimes is also good instead of working all the time."

Tillfur's pace was thrown out of order by the retorts from Sharis and Noct. She was whispering with her gaze away from him while sending short glances.

Normally she was someone who get carried easily and acted as mood maker, but surprisingly she was fundamentally serious.

She was properly being considerate to Lux as one of his friends.

"Right. Then, if you are okay with me please let me participate. Ah, but——"

Lux thought that he would consent readily to her invitation while thinking such thing, but suddenly he became concerned of one thing and hesitated to continue.

The matter of Celis weighed his mind, he wondered whether he could meet her somehow.

"Fuh, you don't need to worry Lux-kun. Your wish should be fulfilled."

Sharis suddenly tapped Lux's shoulder and smiled proudly.

When Lux tilted his head and looked up at the girl, Noct approached him quietly and whispered.

"Yes. Because Celis-senpai is also arranged to participate in this event. At that time if things goes well you should be able to talk with her."

"Ah....."

It seemed the three got an inkling of Celis's behavior.

"Really, my best friend is also a troubling person. Well, it's really like Celis to be like that though."

"Do you, know something about that?"

When Lux asked like that, Sharis only casted her eyes down suggestively.

"Ascertain that with your own eyes Lux-kun. I get the gist of it but, this kind of thing should be heard from the mouth of the person themselves."

".....?"

"Now, let's go Lux-chi. This event this year will surely get heated up!"

Tillfur took Lux's hand to avoid the topic and pulled him.

Lux left the school building together with Philuffy while still not understanding anything.

—

"Everyone from Cross Field! And then everyone of our Academy, are you having fuuuun!? From here our Academy's special event, the costume competition will begiinn!"

A special stage made from wood was set up at the center of the courtyard.

That place was used for things like drama or concert at noon. There, Lux and others, the well-known members were gathered.

When the female student who acted as the host raised her voice, cheers rose up and enthusiasm enveloped the place.

Not just students and Academy personnel, there were also citizens of Cross Field and also guest from other city coming in drove here.

"This time, our Academy's Drag-Knights, the strong and noble beauties of Syvalles will be clad in captivating clothes unlike usual! If your heart is stolen by their figure, please send them a grand applause. Then first—I'll introduce the participants!"

"—Wait, girls.....wait, it's only me who is male here though-!?"

On the stage Lux spontaneously retorted, but everyone casually ignored him.

"Fur-ther-more. The participant who obtains everyone's vote and won will be given a special present. Everyone, please give them your support without fail!"

"WAAAAH"

Loud acclamation enveloped the place once more.

Lux didn't really get it but, it seemed the host was skilled in enlivening the event.

Next the members of Syvalles who were gathered on the stage started introducing themselves in turn.

".....Eerr, I'm first I guess. I'm, the new kingdom's princess, Lizsharte Atismata. It's my first time wearing costume like this but....., I'll do my best."

First Lisha greeted shyly. Cheering voice welled up from the audiences.

After Lisha was Krulcifer, then Philuffy.

And then—the last one finally appeared on the stage.

"That, I am, the captain of Syvalles, Celistia Ralgris. Pe, personally I think that I cannot fool around like this but....."

She was bewildered while sending a glance at Lux.

It seemed that she was splendidly caught in the 'pretend' that Sharis devised.

'When I met Celis just now, I whispered a bit of information to her—I heard that the champion of the next event will be given the right to forcefully give order to Lux-kun. In order to protect him, how about Celis also participate in it? I said.'

As the result of telling her in roundabout way like that, Celis who was watching Lux from the shadow until now came out to the open like this.

(Celis-senpai....., is she all right?)

Although, when he tried to meet her gaze, she would immediately avert her gaze.

The event started while he was fretting about that matter.

"Then, we have finished with the self-introduction, now it's time for changing into the costume. We will distribute the voting paper during this time! One person will only get one paper okaaay! Multiple vote is invalid!"

When Lux and others went behind the stage, various costumes that appeared to be used in the play at the noon were placed there.

While the eyes of Lux and others were wandering around at the large amount of costume, Tillfur came to the front.

"And soo, we will help out with wearing the costume, so tell us what everyone want. By the way, it will be first come first served for the costume."

The Triad and Airi took the role as support for them.

Naturally, even though Lux was called as chore prince, but as expected he didn't have experience in wearing costume.

While he was perplexed of what to do, Airi and Noct came to him together.

For some reason the two of them were holding a black curtain that was attached on circle frame.

"Wait, what's that!? Why is it only me who——"

"Haa, this is why Nii-san who recently is only going to foreign country is troubling. Have you forgotten that this is an academy of noble girls?"

"Aa....."

Lux suddenly noticed the girls holding costume in their hands were staring fixedly at his way from afar.

It was obvious but, they were bothered by the gaze of Lux who was the only man here.

"Yes. —And so, Lux-san, please change inside this blackout curtain. I will help you with it."

While Airi was holding up the the curtain with both her hands, Noct who was from the family background of maid told Lux that.

That offer itself was really helpful, but.

"Say, Noct. Because of this curtain, even I don't know what I am wearing but, this costume, could it be——"

After taking off his uniform, Lux felt somewhat uneasy by the shape of the costume that was handed to him.

How should he say it, if Lux wasn't misunderstanding, there was a skirt mixed among the costume.

"Yes. The hook over here is fixed like this so——it's finished."

Airi lowered the curtain along with Noct's level and calm voice.

At that moment, the other girls who had finished changing simultaneously opened their eyes wide in astonishment.

—

"Well then, everyone who has costumed up will enter the stage. First is the princess of our kingdom, her highness Lizsharte Atismata!"

"OOOOooOH!"

When Lisha appeared first on the stage, a loud cheer welled up.

"Wai-, what the hell with this erotic appearance!? I am the princess of the new kingdom you know!?"

What Lisha was wearing was the a dancer costume with high exposure rate.

It was an outfit that only covered her breast, stomach, and a part of her legs. A translucent cloth completed the costume.

The brightly colored costume that was in the style of southern countries was splendidly drawing out her loveliness that was sensual even with the vague innocence in it.

"Ee, but Lisha-sama. It's not that much different from the pilot suit that you are usually wearing. Besides, it suits her isn't that right? Everyooone!"

The host grinned broadly and stirred up the audiences.

"Bu, but still. As expected this appearance is a bit....."

It was hidden thanks to the waistcloth that was tightly wrapped around her stomach, but she was worrying whether the mark on her abdomen was visible or not.

She wasn't simply embarrassed from the exposure, Lisha was also flustered from worrying about that, it was then,

"What a troubling person. But, surely Lux-kun will also think that Lisha-sama looks cute you know"

"Re, really!?"

On the stage Lisha asked the girl host.

Lux who heard that nodded shortly even while looking troubled. Tillfur who came out from behind the stage secretly told Lisha.

"Yo, yosh, got it. That—I'm not good with dancing so I cannot do it. But I'll fight in the contest with this! Everyone, give me your vote!"

Lisha resolved herself and folded her arms. The audiences got even more excited in respond.

At the same time, the second entry Krulcifer got up from her chair behind the stage.

"She is doing better than I expected. —Then, next will be my turn."

Saying that, Krulcifer who was wearing a black dress suit came up on the stage.

The girl who was clad in tailcoat suit transformed into a beauty in male clothing.

"Ooh, this too is cool."

Her hair was her usual long straight hair, but coupled with her cool smile, it wasn't something distracting at all.

This time it was mainly the female student audiences who were holding their breath with rapt attention.

Lisha who saw that leaked out 'kuh.....' with a bitter face.

"Well then, next person. The daughter of that famous Aingram conglomerate, Philuffy Aingram-saaann"

Next the third person, Philuffy's turn arrived.

Both Lisha and Krulcifer possessed quite the confidence of their appearance, but—.

"......Oo"

"......"

When the expressionless Philuffy came up to the stage, the audiences leaked out a carnal sigh.

It was a risqué costume that was composed of thin cloth and string.

It was complemented with a hair band that imitated animal ears, tights that covered her white thigh, black shoes, and ribbon.

It was somewhat unfamiliar—something with high exposure rate, but coupled with her unique absentminded atmosphere, the appearance looked terribly charming.

In Lux's opinion, it might be a style that took after the Automata they happened to see inside the Ruins.

"Eerr—, this is the outfit of angel that was drawn in a picture which was excavated from the Ruins and other place. Everyone, please enjoy!"

After the host explained, the audiences continued to stare while forgetting to even breath.

It was a low-key reaction compared to the previous two, but surely it was because the audiences forgot themselves due to the lovely atmosphere of the costumed Philuffy.

"Muu..... This is bad, Krulcifer!"

"Seems like it. To think that she will come out attacking with a costume this bold....."

At the side, Lisha and Krulcifer consulted each other in a common front.

At this rate, Philuffy's victory would be set in stone.

While they were thinking of such thing, the host introduced the fourth contestant.

"—Next, the former prince of the old empire, and the only boy of our Academy, Lux Arcadia-kun. Please.....wait, eh?"

When the fourth girl—or rather, boy came up to the stage, the venue stirred slightly.

A boy in maid appearance was standing on the stage with extremely awkward and flustered expression.

He was wearing a dress with black as its basic color, a clean apron, and white maid headdress.

The skirt's length was short because it was the customized version of the uniform that Tillfur was wearing previously.

And then, what was eye catching above all else was the non-existent wig to hide Lux's feature.

"You all are terrible!? Why is it only me whose costume is half-baked like this....."

The wearer of the costume, Lux was the very picture of a child-faced boy with well-ordered face, so everyone noticed instantly that it was a cross dressing boy.

But, seeing the girl-faced young boy wearing maid uniform, the audiences were staring at that in a daze.

At first their reaction was simply of bewilderment, but gradually their reaction was changing.

"O, oi Krulcifer. Don't tell me this is"

"Yes....., most likely the Triad estimated that Lux-kun would easily win if he is perfectly dressed with female clothing, so they didn't give him the wig, but looking carefully——"

At that moment, the hearts of Lisha and Krulcifer, and then the assembled audiences were one in thought.

‘Isn't this alright in its own way’, they thought.

It was an imperfect cross-dressing, but in exchange the aspect of the child-faced young boy was highlighted, and there was even the sense of immorality from how the boy was clearly forced to wear the costume.

Lux who was unaware of such thought in the heart of the masses was suffering heartache. Seeing that, Philuffy took Lux's hand with slightly blushing cheeks.

".....Lu-chan. You are cute."

"Phi-chan!?"

A lovely girl in the figure of animal spirit, and a young boy who was dressed as maid faced each other.

It was magical—or perhaps perverse, as though the two had slipped out from a fairytale somewhere. The audiences were deeply moved by such scene, the students and citizens gave them applauses.

"Both of you matched each other!"

"That's great, missy and lad!"



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"So, somehow it feels like I've seen something forbidden..... But for some reason—I, I cannot take my eyes off them."

The students and visitors raised their cheers and gave them praising voice.

The mood was as though the contender for the overall victory was suddenly reduced to just Philuffy and Lux, but right after that, the sound of footsteps of the last contestant coming up to the stage could be heard.

"Well then while everyone is roused up, it's the last contestant. The big shot of our new kingdom, the strongest Drag-Knight in the Academy, it's captain Celistia Ralgris!"

The girl who acted as the host raised her voice and loudly introduced.

At the same time a girl was slowly climbing up the stair. Everyone spontaneously held their breath.

After all it was the figure of Celis whose body was only wrapped with water dressswimsuit for summer and a jacket.

Furthermore, the exposure rate was even more intense than the one Lux saw previously in the training camp. When looked from behind, the surface of her butt could be seen much.

Furthermore the swimsuit was opened gapingly until her back. Lux's gaze was strongly pulled into her even though they were standing on the same stage.

"Wai-!? Wha, what is the meaning of this—!? This is different from what I heard-!? I, I was told that everyone will be wearing water dress so.....! Even so, that can't be helped in order to protect Lux isn't it!?"

Celis who always possessed a dignified grace was exposing the line of her voluptuous body with bright red face.

She was a graceful young daughter of a duke, but she was also a straight-laced person who hated man.

The general public that held such impression toward Celis got excited by the gap and they raised joyful yells.

".....In the end, men are all just a perverted beast."

"It seems so. The atmosphere before this was instantly blown away without a trace."

With a really conflicted face, Krulcifer agreed with the dumbfounded Lisha.

Lux's ears hurt hearing what the two said frankly, but even so, Celis was emitting charm that he couldn't resist from looking even now.

"I, it's no good as expected! E, excuse me!"

Celis who was flustered from the unexpected response from the audiences turned around and got down from the stage.

After a while, Celis returned on the stage wearing a pilot suit with exposure rate that was somewhat lowered.

"The, there is no time to prepare substitute costume so, with this..... If it's this I've been wearing it habitually so——"

Celis pulled herself back together while standing with a serious expression.

This time she was in her usual appearance. It caused the female students who idolized her to watch enraptured.

The male visitors looked somewhat disappointed, but the pilot suit also had quite a lot of exposure rate, and was alluring how it was clinging tightly on the body.

Furthermore there was also a gap with the adorableness that she showed just now, so it displayed Celis even more charmingly.

"Well then, it's time for the voting with all the contestants lined up here! Now, all of you, give your vote to the student who you thought as the best among these five!"

The host raised her voice and the audiences put their vote into the box.

When Lux came down from the stage in order to change clothes, his gaze accidentally met the gaze of Celis who was wearing pilot suit.

".....-!?"

He thought to ask Celis about the matter of her avoiding him since some time ago, but Lux too was embarrassed that he was still in maid costume, so both of them averted their gaze reflexively.

"Good grief, even though I set it up for him to meet Celis after much trouble, these two are really hopeless."

The Triads were staring at the two from afar while sighing.

If Lux lost in this costume tournament, it was unknown what kind of unseemly order he would receive—it seemed that they brought Celis here with such threat.

"But to think that she would even wear that water dress. Celis-senpai is a bit different as expected when it comes to Lux-chi."

"Yes. Honestly speaking, the first water dress was a joke with the assumption that she would refuse, but now I felt greatly apologetic."

Tillfur and Noct muttered with slight reservation. Airi were staring reproachfully at them from the side.

"If Celis-senpai heard it just now, she will scold you all harshly you know.....?"

"....."

Lux was faintly listening to such conversation behind him while he finished changing clothes.

(Celis-senpai went that far so that I won't receive any strange order.....)

If that was the case, then that meant Celis didn't hate him or anything.

However, then he became even more puzzled.

If that was the case all this time, he wondered why she wouldn't talk directly with him.

"The voting result has come! All the participants, please come up to the stage once more!"

With the host urging, Lux and others, the five contestants returned on the stage.

Right after that, the bell tower within the Academy ground rang loudly and small confetti fluttered in the air.

"Congratulations! The one who obtained the most vote, is Celistia-san of the four great nobles!"

"Eh.....?"

The moment Celis's eyes turned round in astonishment, loud cheers roared in front of the stage.

Perhaps it should be said as expected, the risqué water dress figure at the beginning, and then the dignified pilot suit figure after that.

The two appearances gathered vote from both male and female.

Furthermore Lux and Philuffy tied for the second place. He expressed the feeling inside his heart that he didn't know whether it was alright to honestly be happy about it.

A trophy and two envelopes were presented to Celis as the prize.

"Fufufu, please open one of the envelope. One is the true reward—the certificate of the right to give any order you like to anyone in this campus festival. The other one is a punishment game where you will need to approach the opposite sex. You still cannot let your guard down here~"

"I don't really get it but, this one——"

Celis was shaken while opening one of the envelopes.

There, she saw the content that was written on it and she spontaneously blinked.

"Whoops, it's the enveloped of punishment game. The content is——kissing someone of the opposite sex! It's alright to do it anywhere!"

After the host read up the content loudly, a great commotion spread through the venue.

The male visitors were cheering, while the female students were making somewhat envious expression while staring at Celis and Lux.

"Eerr..... By opposite sex, you mean——"

"Yes. In Celis-senpai's case it will be toward man—that's what it means. If you like, you can even do it with a boy close to you, right here, right now....."

"Wha, wha-wha-wha-wha-wha-!? Tha, that's not permitted!? Doing such thing in front of people——"

"Eee? But, this is the Academy's main attraction. Please go along with it properly~"

The host urged like that with a mischievous tone.

‘The Academy’s’——, hearing those words, Celis slowly gazed at Lux’s face even while her cheeks were turning red.

"Celis, senpai....."

Stared by Celis’s vaguely seductive expression, the beating of Lux’s heart was throbbing intensely.

Celis was walking toward him and brought her lips closer with a troubled face.

(Wha, what to do!? No matter what, doing something like this in front of people——)

Even while feeling flustered like that, he thought that it might make do somehow if it was only a little peck on the cheek.

Lux resolved himself like that and took a deep breath, then he closed his eyes——but,

"I, it’s no good as I thought!? I’m——"

Celis whose face was bright red got down from the stage and ran away.

"Oh dear, so Lux-kun got dumped. Then, let’s have the punishment game done later! Well then everyone. Thank you very much for comiing!"

The host dealt even with the sudden happening flexibly and concluded the event nicely.

"Ahaha....."

Even while smiling wryly from being made as joke material, Lux was feeling strangely complicated, but behind him and behind the stage, the girls were patting down their chest in relieve.

"Fuu....., it’s lucky that Celis is so straight-laced. Honestly I was feeling chilly there. E, even I haven’t kissed him——"

"You're right. But we still cannot let our guard down. After all that person is also unexpectedly powerful."

"Yeah..... Wait, you did it as you pleased right!? Even though I didn't even permit it, but several times——!"

At the side of Lisha and Krulcifer who was talking of such things, Lux who got down from the stage was in a daze.

In the end, he was unable to talk to Celis about why she was avoiding him until now.

"I understand that Nii-san is disappointed that you were unable to receive the kiss, so can I ask you to act a bit more firmly?"

Perhaps unable to bear to look of her big brother who was like that, the little sister Airi retorted like that.

"Yo, you misunderstand!? That's, I'm, concerned with Celis-senpai's state——. I don't understand, if she is actually avoiding me or not....."

After Lux said that without confidence, Sharis of the Triad smiled wryly.

".....Well, it can't be helped. There is also no way we can meddle for more than this.

"It feels like you had interfered all out with Celis-senpai to make her participate in this event though....."

Sharis ignored Lux's retort and smiled.

And then Lux left the courtyard stage and returned once more to his odd jobs specialist work. It was at that time——,

"Excuseee me! Please wait!"

Coral was running in front of Lux's eyes. Perhaps he was in the middle of a break, because he wasn't wearing butler uniform, but the uniform of Vanheim Principality. (TN: I used Wanheim before this, after discussing with Omega I decided to change it into Vanheim)

"Coral, what's the matter?"

"Ah, Lux-kun?"

Lux immediately followed behind the running Coral while calling out to him.

The young boy with androgynous face smiled awkwardly then.

"No, it looks like a customer forgot his thing just now. There was a wallet in it, but it looks like the customer has gone until the academy gate——"

"Then, I'll also help. I know well about the surrounding area."

Lux immediately responded like that and ran side by side with Coral.

After talking to the gatekeeper and got the permission to get out, they found out the back of the man wearing gray coat, which was the feature of the person Coral told Lux.

"It looks like we made it in time. Thank you, from here I'll be fine by myself."

Coral suddenly showed a bright smile before he dashed toward the alley the man turned into.

But, right after Lux nodded and waved his hand, a sense of discomfort ran through his body.

(Wait? If I remember right, the other side of the alley over there is——)

Coral who wasn't a resident of Cross Field wasn't familiar with the area, but the end of that alley should be a dead end right now because the street was under construction.

The moment Lux thought that, without delay he pulled out the Sword Device on his waist.

And then, he thought strongly and summoned Wyvern, equipped it quickly, and flew.

"Lux-kun!?"

When Lux crossed the wall and flew to the other side of the alley, he discovered the figure of Coral's body being restrained by a dark grey Drag-Ride.

His bad premonition was right in the mark.

Coral was lured by the man who seemed to be a bandit using the wallet as the bait, and he was caught.

"—You!?"

Conversely the rough man with black mustache wearing EX Drake was surprised by Lux's appearance. His eyes snapped wide open and he trembled.

"Let him go-!"

Not letting go of that opening, Lux quickly launched an attack using his Blade.

The enemy's armored arm was slightly scraped and the restriction on Coral loosened.

Using that chance, Lux drove his Wyvern and took Coral back, he then flew to the sky and took distance from the enemy.

If he could be greedy, he wanted to defeat the Drag-Knight right here, but he also couldn't do that.

His movement would be restricted if he had to keep protecting Coral who wasn't wearing his Drag-Ride, and the skill of the enemy who was wearing the strengthened general-purpose Drag-Ride and the possibility of other ambusher were unknown.

Carelessly pursuing the enemy might expose Lux and Coral to danger instead.

Thus Lux was watching the situation. There the enemy recovered his calm and showed a mocking grin.

".....Disappointing. To think that you can take him back. Even though a peace loving idiot drank in benevolence finally got lured out just to give back something like forgotten wallet. —See ya!"

The man yelled, at the same time, a strange round blade flew out from the shoulder of the EX Drake.

"—!?"

When Lux quickly swung his Blade and deflected it, the figure of the enemy vanished.

"....."

After looking around for a few seconds in alert, Lux landed down for the moment and picked an armor fragment.

The two returned to the Academy and talked to the guards about the circumstance, and then he confirmed that Coral wasn't injured.

"Thank you Lux-kun. Sorry....., I troubled you like that."

"No. It's me who should apologize. If only I noticed the enemy's intention faster——"

When Lux told that to Coral who was hanging his head down apologetically, the androgynous faced young boy stared fixedly at Lux's face.

And then, he showed a smile that looked relieved.

"As I thought, Lux-kun really is a good person. There is also a person like the one just now but, not everyone is like that isn't it..... As I thought, that's right. Next time when you are in trouble, I too will come to help you for sure——"

"Right. Take care of me then, Coral."

Lux responded with a smile at Coral's murmur that had left behind his bewilderment.

The shadow of unrest of the enemy who slipped into the hustle and bustle of the campus festival and took them by surprise.

While feeling a tinge of anxiety due to that, they returned inside the Academy.

—

Part 5

After finishing several requests after that, the sun had set in the blink of eye.

The first half of the campus festival—, the festival's first day came to a close.

There was also the opening of the summit and the stay of the Seven Dragon Paladins here. Lux even felt a vague premonition of trouble, but today was so peaceful that he could even forget such nervousness while the time was passing.

In the middle, it seemed there were also five or six cases of the kind of peeping or thieving toward the female students by outsiders who traveled here expressly for that, but it seemed that they were safely prevented before any harm was done.

This event that also doubled as interaction with the citizens of Cross Field seemed to receive superb popularity but—.

"Haa....."

Late at night when Lux finished helping out with all the work and tidying up, he was wiping his body alone in his own room inside the girl dormitory.

Normally if his luck was good, he would be able to use the large public bath after the female students of the Academy finished bathing, but only for today everyone was entering the bath late, so he wasn't blessed by such chance.

He felt just a bit disappointed that he couldn't enter the large bath.

"I got a bit too used with the luxury here huh."

Lux wiped his half-naked body while smiling wryly.

Through his livelihood of doing chores for five years, it was natural to not be able to enter bath, and yet in his current academy livelihood, he had adapted really well with the life here.

However, Lux's worries were the same with that time.

The atonement of being unable to accomplish the revolution just as he saw fit.

And then, his other worry.

About his doubt, that perhaps he actually didn't understand anything about other people's feeling.

At that time, he was unable to detect the sign of Fugil's betrayal.

And then even now, it was as though he couldn't even imagine what was the reason of that betrayal.

Lux wondered that perhaps it was a defect he had as an imperial family member—no, as a human.

"As I thought, I....."

"It seems Aruji-sama is really tired from today. The muscles of your body are stiff."

".....Ah, yeah. I was having fun in the Academy after so long, that today I got too enthusiastic."

The sensation of towel that was just soaked into hot water wiping his back caused Lux to reflexively reply like that.

"That's great. But, having fatigue remaining will be a hindrance for the skill demonstration battle tomorrow. Allow me to unravel Aruji-sama's stiffness."

"Thank you, Yoruka. —Wait, what are you doing in my room!?"

Lux who noticed an instant later turned around and yelled.

Strange.

He certainly didn't hear any knocking sound, and not to mention any footsteps or even breathing sound, and yet she was suddenly here.

Kirihime Yoruka was standing there, as though she crawled out from the shadow.

"My, I shouldn't do that, Aruji-sama?"

But, the girl herself didn't show any sign of guilty feeling. She was smiling calmly.

"N, no, it's fine for you to come meet me but, right now is no good you know!? If other people saw this scene inside the girl dormitory, as expected they will completely misunderstand——"

When Lux spoke in bewilderment, the girl clad in black clothes in the style of foreign country tilted her head in puzzlement, then right after that she smiled apologetically.

"That's also true. Then allow me to take off my clothes too. Like this no matter how anyone looked at it, there is no way other people would mistake me as anything other than a loyal servant serving Aruji-sama."

"That's not it!? I'm not worrying about us getting misunderstood in that kind of meaning you know!?"

Lux reflexively tried to look back, but he noticed that Yoruka was already stark naked and he faced forward in panic.

Right after that, Yoruka pushed her body to stick close on Lux's back.

"-.....!?"

The smooth sensation of velvety skin.

Furthermore the sweet sensation of breasts being pressed on his back caused Lux's skin to get goosebumps.

When his head spontaneously about to get boiled up, Yoruka's whispering voice entered his ear.

"I beg you to be quiet, Aruji-sama. Or else the 'report' I had been painstakingly gathered would be eavesdropped."

"——"

Lux quickly returned to his senses from Yoruka's words.

And then, Yoruka wiped Lux's body while slowly talking to him.

"The Blue Tyrant, Lord Singlen. The Steel Witch, Rosa Granhide. And then, the three Lords including Fugil Arcadia. They were observing the festival docilely without leaving the eyes of their guards from new kingdom—the people tasked to observe them."

Yoruka wasn't showing her figure at most of the whole first day of the campus festival was because she was fulfilling a request from Lux.

The performance of The Knight of Foreign Country that was entrusted to her wasn't restricted by anything except that 'she had to patrol the venue in that appearance'. Because of that Lux could ask her to do this task.

The three factions Lux was on guard against that were in this Academy right now.

Singlen Shelbrit who was envisioning a new order by the Drag-Knights.

Rosa Granhide, the Seven Dragon Paladin from Heiburg who showed warlike attitude toward the new kingdom.

The three Lords who came to negotiate.

Lux was cautious to the possibility that they might be scheming some kind of disturbance in this campus festival, but it seemed nothing had happened.

"Am I....., worrying too much?"

Lux directed calm gaze to the floor and murmured.

In this situation where the VIP from many countries were gathered and the surveillance was also strengthened, as expected even they didn't show any disturbing movement.

But, even among the three factions, he felt bad premonition only from Rosa.

The instinct that Lux cultivated at his time in the old empire more than five years ago felt it.

Rosa was emitting a severe malice toward other people.

She wasn't merely bold and arrogant, it would be dangerous if he didn't take countermeasure against her, his instinct told him.

"Aruji-sama's decision isn't mistaken. I too feel from that woman—a definite hostility. After I finish this report, I will return to observe that woman."

"No, it's fine."

Lux refused Yoruka's suggestion.

And then, while keeping his back turned on Yoruka who was soaking the towel with hot water again behind him, he suddenly smiled.

"Thank you for today, Yoruka. And then, I'm sorry to ask unreasonable thing like this from you. Tomorrow you can freely enjoy the campus festival until the time for the skill demonstration battle of me and Celis-senpai."

"....."

There was no response which was unusual for Yoruka, so Lux looked back slightly. There Yoruka was staring at Lux with an expression that looked unusually puzzled.

"Eh? What's the matter, Yoruka?"

"No, Aruji-sama was saying something strange aren't you? Such thing is unnecessary for me."

Yoruka showed her usual bewitching smile while muttering that.

"I am Aruji-sama's tool. It will be my satisfaction if I can be useful for the sake of accomplishing Aruji-sama's aspiration. Besides, I'm a little troubled. Festival was also held in my nation of Koto, but in the first place I possess no emotion to enjoy it."

In the past Yoruka was a member of the royal family of an island nation at the east, and yet she was feared by her father because of her lack of humanity and she was abandoned. She had such experience.

"Besides, thinking of the safety of this academy where Aruji-sama is staying, it will be more efficient to make use of me."

".....Perhaps, that's so."

Lux nodded to Yoruka's suggestion.

If thinking about the advantage and disadvantage, certainly that would be the best decision to make.

But,

"But—even so I want Yoruka to try to normally spend your time in the campus festival. Perhaps this is just my own willful imposition to you but, if it's just for a bit, I will be able to look around together with you."

".....Aruji-sama is saying the same thing like Lizsharte-san."

"Lisha-sama was?"

Lux tilted his head hearing that unexpected comparison.

When he asked, during their travel to Ymir Theocracy to chase after Lux, Lisha spoke to Yoruka about various things, and even after that it seemed she kept speaking to Yoruka frequently.

For a moment Lux thought of it as odd, but after thinking for a bit, he somehow could imagine the reason.

"That is surely, because Lisha-sama is also similar like you I think?"

Lux abruptly smiled and spoke of his own conjecture.

In the past, Lisha was captured as hostage of the old empire and she was about to be reduced into an assassin.

She had to act the role where her own feeling was irrelevant, first as the tool of negotiation with her father who intended to perform coup d'état, then as the symbol of the new kingdom after that.

Lux didn't mention about the fine detail, but he told Yoruka that Lisha was once in a similar environment with her.

Lux indirectly conveyed to her that surely there was a part her that Lisha could sympathize with.

"That's why, knowing that Yoruka is treating yourself as 'tool' all this time, perhaps Lisha-sama is unable to just tolerate it."

"Is, that so? —But, unfortunately I cannot understand it."

"I see.["

Lux smiled wryly seeing Yoruka's unchanging smile.

"But, I will follow what Aruji-sama told me to do. I believe I wish to look around the festival tomorrow. I will also go to Lizsharte-san's place too for a bit."

"I think that Lisha-sama will also surely be happy if you come. If Yoruka's place in this Academy can increase more like that—that will be great."

"Then, Aruji-sama. I sincerely asked you to be careful tomorrow."

Right after his confidential talk with Yoruka was finished, *knock knock* the sound of the door getting knocked resounded.

The voice of Lisha who they just had talked about came from the other side of the door.

"Oi Lux. About the skill demonstration battle tomorrow, see, I tuned up your Drag-Ride slightly using the information that your little sister gathered too——"

"Wai-, right now it's no good.....-!?"

Lux yelled, but he was an instant late. The door opened.

Seeing the half-naked Lux and the fully naked Yoruka inside the room, Lisha instantly turned totally unmoving like statue.

"Wha, what are you doing to Lux-!? This ero woman——!"

Lisha who became teary eyed yelled. Hearing that, female students from other room also gathered there.

After that, it took a lot of time until Lisha calmed down and talked to him.

—

Part 6

Outside the Academy.

A single man was standing nearby the government office building where the leaders' representatives were staying at.

Fugil who came as the guard of Listelka, the imperial family who represented the Lords, he was silently feeling the wind blowing in the garden within the ground.

At that place where the bustle of the academy from afar could be heard, he was sitting on a small rock while staring up to the sky.

It was a time of vacuum where the observers and guards from the new kingdom were taking their eyes off him slightly.

Within that time that was flowing slowly, a single outsider element lost its way to there.

A silver haired young man with empty smile affixed on his face.

A few ml ahead of him, a humanoid shape that didn't exist there a few seconds ago appeared.

"Hey, Fugil. Why did you save those dogs and cats? Doing that for the sake of unfamiliar animals, that you would even go as far as catching them yourselves."

"....."

It was a strange thing with humanoid shape.

—No, it was a silver haired girl with blue eyes, clad in pure white dress. She was asking that question while tilting her head.

She was a petite girl that gave off impression of purity and charm, with an appearance that no one in this world knew.

It was only one person who knew this girl's name, only Fugil.

"Arcadia family. The blood descendant of greedy traitors. You who are called like that with despise, why were you trying to save existences that are completely unrelated to you behind everyone's back?"

"....."

Fugil didn't respond to the question.

He was merely sending a sober gaze toward the girl, as though he was staring at a play that had been repeated hundreds of times.

"You fought against your own desire without care of any loss and gain for yourself, you even abandoned yourself to save the weak. You are actually, not a horrible human like everyone is saying. The truth is, you are a kind person who cannot overlook a troubled person. You are a person with the courage who can fight for the sake of someone else. That's what I believe."

"....."

The pretty expression of the girl before his eyes was frequently changing.

Fugil didn't show any respond toward that inexplicable existence.

"I didn't want to do it. To arbitrarily decide that all of you are bad people and massacre you all. As a princess I didn't want to give such order, but on the other hand as a person in the position of responsibility, I was hesitating all this time. Thanks to you, I could overcome it without making a mistake. You gave salvation to my heart that feared to sin. You are——my hero."

"....."

Right after that smile, the girl's figure instantly transformed.

It was as though the speed of time was fast-forwarded, the girl's height grew slightly, and she changed into a grown up.

"Fugil. I want to use the power of this Avalon to accomplish a certain thing. I want to create a mechanism called Sacred Eclipse, in order to give

salvation to the people. Those without power, those who is suffering from unfair discrimination, those who doesn't have anyone extending a helping hand to them, I want to save them, even if just by one more person. I want to bring peace. I will be waiting for you to wake up, no matter how long, so——"

The face of the woman who had matured more than before smiled.

But right after that, a repulsive transformation occurred on that strange shaped body that imitated the girl.

"Gobah.....!"

The girl's head split open and fresh blood dyed her face and hair.

Her pure white dress crumbled into tatters and countless whip marks emerged on her skin.

Her whole body was hideously burned along with an offensive smell, her nails were torn off, countless holes opened on her soft skin.

The fingers of her hands and feet fell in pieces on the ground.

Her eyeballs fell out as though they were gouged out, her teeth were also falling.

Her tongue vanished as though thye were extracted out, her skin was carbonized.

Both her arms were decapitated, her shape was changing.

From human to thing.

The girl was changing shape into a wreckage of thing that was once a human.

"——Hey, Fugil. It's thanks to you."

That existence that lost its original shape let out a voice that was unchanged in gentleness and elegance.

"Thanks to you saving everyone without abandoning them, I am—so"

""

The mouth of the thing that was a girl before warped into the shape of crescent moon.

And then, from the gouged out eye sockets, liquid that was like tear, like blood was flowing out.

'Elixir'—it was the secret medicine of Ruins that guided human to evolution. It was shining sparkingly with seven colors.

—

"—Have you forgotten everything again? But unfortunately, Sacred Eclipse, I don't need that anymore."

Fugil who saw that finally showed a slight reaction.

"Your salvation is unnecessary for me. You can go, for the sake of the promise you are looking for. For the sake of the future that you yourself are wishing for. I won't do anything to hinder you."

""

The thing that was called Sacred Eclipse stood still on the spot for a few seconds, then its figure suddenly vanished like smoke.

That contact with inexplicable phenomenon met its end without anyone else witnessing it.

A silence descended.

Within the time that was engraved with only gently blowing wind, Fugil gazed at the empty air and whispered.

".....No matter how many times I start over, no matter how much I go around at any kind of country—"

The man let out a long sigh with an expression that resembled resignation.

"Something like 'hero' that you longed for cannot be found anywhere, Asalia....."

An empty and warped voice.

That man continued to murmur with a dry voice filled with mere hopelessness.

"A hero..... Something like hero——cannot be found anywhere in this world."

A hatred that was like curse.

An emotion that vaguely resembled resentment leaked out from between the gritted teeth.

—

Part 7

The second day of campus festival.

The latter half of the festival that was blessed with consecutive clear weather was also passing by exceedingly peacefully.

Lux's odd jobs specialist work was a success as usual, but he received work conservatively in preparation for the skill exhibition battle that would be held in the end of today, furthermore he would only work throughout the morning.

Today he was mainly enlivening events on stage, and he also performed interesting endeavors like giving coaching to the students in the practice ground and so on.

Lisha was called on stage as one of the few specialists to explain about Drag-Ride. She showcased her terribly maniac knowledge. Krulcifer was also made to talk about anything as the representative of the new kingdom's allied country, Ymir Theocracy.

In the event of martial art coaching, Philuffy and Yoruka took the role as coaching instructor, and a long line of queue was formed in front of the tent.

".....Heh, that kind of absent minded and big breasted spoiled lady with, how can she win against a man bare-handed. I'll grope her all over under all the turmoil!"

"Ku-ku-ku, I'll absolutely go with that black hair over there. Even though she is just wearing a uniform, she looks strangely lewd and stimulating. Something like sword skill ain't matter, I'll push her down and sniff the noble lady smell till I'm satisfied."

Two men who had large build with rough atmosphere laughed to each other while baring out their vulgar character.

The event was already packed out to the degree that numbered tickets were distributed, but seeing how all the lining up customers were male, the character of human could be felt clearly here.

"Haha, this year too it's a big hit. It must be that. Everyone will forget when a year passed. Even though they got severely beaten up every year."

Lux smiled wryly seeing Tillfur's innocent smile.

Before long, the screams of men getting their joint lightly twisted by the girls could be heard.

"But this, isn't it a bit cruel.....?"

After all, the instructors were Philuffy and Yoruka.

Philuffy who possessed physical ability that was strengthened by Abyss and the knowledge of martial art coached in unarmed fighting, while Yoruka coached in sword art using practice sword.

The men estimated they could win just from looking at the girls' outward appearance and held strange expectation. Now they became pitiful.

"Don't mind them. After all only men with obscene thought are lining up there. Besides, if they aren't threatened periodically like this, the peeping and sexual harassment will only go up."

Sharis concluded with such an opinion that was becoming for the captain of the Academy's vigilance committee.

"Yes. Lux-san too if you still have interest, then how about trying a rematch with us three? We are training recently, so this time we won't lose."

Lux smiled awkwardly at the invitation Noct was saying with a bland tone.

After all when he first came to this Academy, he was also chased around by these three due to being suspected as a peeping tom.

No, it was a fact that at that time he saw the naked body of the girls though.

"Even so, it really helps that Yoruka missy helps out. Originally it should be Celis who take charge of being the sword art instructor, but she suddenly said that she want to sit this out."

Sharis suddenly changed the topic and explained the circumstance this time.

"Celis-senpai was? Why——"

Was it as expected, that the matter of the costume tournament yesterday affected her strongly?

"Who knows. Though perhaps it's disappointing for Lux-chi because you are unable to get a kiss from Celis-senpai."

"Yes. Everyone remember about the punishment game properly, so rest assured."

"Yo, you are wrong!? It's not like I'm worrying about that though, I am just——worried about Celis-senpai....."

Because at the evening today, the skill exhibition battle would be held with Heiburg Republic as the opponent.

No——that wasn't all.

Celis's condition had been strange since some time ago and she avoided him.

Why was she taking such attitude? Lux who was unable to realize the answer also felt frustrated himself.

(In the end I——, cannot even understand other people's feeling.)

When he was thinking of such thing, a hand was suddenly plopped on Lux's head.

Sharis who was showing the composure of the older one watched over Lux kindly.

"Yosh, come with me prince. I know about the right booth for a worrying young boy."

"Eh.....?"

Sharis pulled the hand of Lux whose mouth was gaping open in puzzlement and she started walking away.

Like that Lux entered into the crowd along with the Triads.

—

Part 8

"This is sudden but please give us a fortune telling. This boy is today's customer."

After joining a queue for a bit, they stepped inside a classroom booth that had the plank with 'Fortune-Telling Mansion' written on it.

Lux had recollection of the girl who was sitting in front of the table with a spherical crystal put on it.

It was a girl whose mouth was hidden by a fabric, wearing strange outfit of foreign country with high degree of exposure.

As expected he wouldn't fail to recognize that figure who had particular trait of dark brown skin and tattoo.

"Oh, I feel like I have seen your from somewhere desu. Heh? Who could you be—ouch-!?"

When the hat wearing girl standing beside that girl muttered so, a fist dug onto her back.

The hat girl straightened her back in panic and began her 'interpreter' work.

"I, it's a joke desu!? I don't forget desu! Hello Lux Arcadia-sama. This is Turkimes Confederation's representative for Seven Dragon Paladins—the shy and reticent Soffice, and her aide Uruk desu."

Lux also returned an awkward greeting to the girl who was talking with a peculiar tone.

"....."

The style of the two was basically the same like at the summit before, where the big sister Soffice didn't talk at all, while her little sister Uruk aided her by speaking in her place.

"But, why are you two here? To suddenly participate in the booth of the Academy——"

Soffice and Uruk originally should be visitors, but for some reason they were participating in a booth at this campus festival.

When Lux tilted his head in puzzlement, Sharis taught him the answer.

"Originally this should be a place for a certain student to do fortune telling, but the other place is a bit lacking in helper you see. It seemed that student then entrusted this booth to these two who were coincidentally there as customers."

"No matter what, that's just too irresponsible isn't it.....?"

Lux whispered half dumbfounded, but in front of him Soffice shook her head left and right.

"You're wrong desu, Lux-sama. From the beginning Soffice is good with fortune telling, so she was entrusted with this booth by her own will—that's what she said desu."

The little sister Uruk explained proudly. Soffice also nodded up and down in respond.

"That's right desu. Then in this rare chance, as commemoration Soffice will exhibit one of the fortune-telling methods that is her forte, the secret technique 'Nude Fortune-Telling' desu——gehaah!?"

Soffice who was angry with red cheeks hit Uruk's head hard.

With the large spherical crystal that seemed to be the fortune-telling tool.

"M, my apologize, don't fool around too much.....that's what Soffice said desu."

"Ah, I somehow understand that even without getting told....."

After Lux retorted like that to Uruk who carry out the role of speaking as proxy, Soffice pulled herself together and started the fortune-telling.

After Lux sat down in front of her, Soffice prepared unfamiliar card set and then asked several questions.

Of course, Soffice wasn't making any voice, so it was her little sister Uruk who was asking.

Soffice took Lux's hand, touched it all over, then she stared straight at Lux.

"What is your worry desu? Whether it's battle or romance, asking anything is fine desu."

Lux took a deep breath, then after thinking slightly, he spoke.

About his feeling to a certain girl that he couldn't notice by himself.

"That, I might be hated by a certain senpai who is someone important to me, if possible I want to reconcile with her——"

Immediately after that, right behind—a faint presence was moving outside the classroom.

But, Lux who was concentrating on the fortune-teller in front of him didn't notice that.

"I see, then let's tell your fortune in regard to that. Whether your wish will come true or not——"

After shuffling the card set, Soffice made Lux to choose several of the cards along with an incantation gesture, then she turned the cards over.

When those cards were lined up, the result immediately came out.

—

Part 9

"Just what in the world I am doing.....?"

When Lux was receiving fortune-telling, Celis heard his question from outside the classroom.

It wasn't a coincidence, even after the second day of the campus festival started, Celis had been watching over Lux all this time from hiding in order to help him out.

When she met Lux face to face, she would avert her gaze from him completely due to a reason that even she herself didn't understand.

Furthermore because of the arrangement where she had to kiss Lux, her inexplicable condition that even resembled a sickness was worsening.

The beating of her heart was throbbing very violently. She couldn't come down and strength left her.

She became unable to regulate herself like before.

But even after her condition was turning like that, she didn't want to run away.

She didn't want to throw away the mission of supporting and protecting him.

Thus, she didn't show herself in front of Lux and intended to act so at least she could become his strength from the shadow, and yet—.

".....Something like this is the first time."

Until just slightly a while ago, there would be no problem if she didn't face Lux from nearby.

But, today, even when she was observing Lux from hiding, she couldn't calm down when seeing other girls acting playful with him cheerfully.

"Wade-sensei. Just what is happening to me.....?"

Her private tutor who gave the young her guidance and built a firm foundation within her.

Celis muttered the name of the man who was also Lux's grandfather.

His instruction manual wasn't only filled with the writing of the way to train the body, but also the heart, but even after following that, the throbbing of her heart couldn't be suppressed.

"I am here in order to become a reliable strength for him as a senpai. And yet, at this rate——.....-!?"

Celis's expression that looked somewhat like she was having nightmare from a fever instantly switched into a serious look.

She felt something like a gaze from the forest near the back of the Academy, the outer wall with no sign of human presence.

"....."

Her hand touched the handle of her Sword Device, then she put her breathing in order and peeked at the situation.

A thin man with high stature who seemed to be past middle-aged was observing the students from afar.

She didn't have any recollection of such a man from recently, but that back figure felt nostalgic somehow to her.

But, that man's conduct was obviously different from normal visitor.

(.....I have no time to call others.)

Celis was staring still at the man to not miss even a moment of his movement.

But, she wondered why.

The more she looked, the more she felt caught by a strange sensation that felt nostalgic.

Suddenly that man turned toward her. At that moment, Celis's time stopped.

".....It has been a long time, Celis. You aren't listening to what I say again.....no, you are listening too much that you act rashly perhaps."

The refined voice that possessed depth, and the hair color that was tinged with grey.

"You, how could this....."

Celis went speechless after muttering that. Her eyes were wide open.

Her former teacher who once gave her guidance, and who died in prison due to his admonition to the old empire that he said because of the words she told him, the grandfather of Lux, Wade Roadvelt was standing there.

—

Part 10

"I will look for Celis-senpai."

Until now he was waiting for Celis to come, but after hearing from Sharis that she was protecting Lux while hiding herself, he couldn't just sit still.

"I'll root for you Lux-kun. Take care of Celis."

"—Yes."

After replying like that to Sharis of Triad, Lux hurriedly exited the Fortune-Telling Mansion.

And then, he heard from Tillfur and Noct about the direction that seemed to be where Celis had ran away to and he started running.

"Cheeh.....it feels like a wasted effort. It must be that, right? In the end Celis-senpai is unable to look at Lux's face because of that kinda reason anyway, right?"

"Yes. Most likely, but—"

Tillfur grumbled after Lux left, with Noct giving her a vague respond.

"That way of talking is no good you two. Even though it's completely obvious for us who are watching from the side, but for the people involved themselves, it's a really serious problem for them."

Sharis concluded like that, but Tillfur only puffed out her cheeks in dissatisfaction.

"Yes. Tillfur also not in the position to speak about other."

"Haaah!? What are you saying, so suddenly!? It's not like I'm thinking about Lux-chi that—"

"No one is mentioning Lux-kun though."

Sharis retorted like that to the flustered Tillfur while looking at the table.

The hint from the fortune-telling according to Uruk was a combination of sun and moon.

It hinted to a close relationship that wouldn't intersect just by staying as they were.

—

On the other hand, Lux who was searching around inside the Academy's ground finally found Celis's figure.

But, her condition seemed strange.

She was only standing still without any movement while facing the tall man in front of her.

"So you were, alive.....Wade-sensei!? Bu, but, why are you here——"

"What's the matter? Didn't you have something that you want to ask me? If it's the hardworking and studious you, then you will surely be able to learn it right away."

The two were making such conversation.

(Wade.....? The name of my dead grandfather, why——)

An uncomfortable feeling rose inside Lux hearing that name. It took away his awareness for a few moment.

But right after that, he noticed the true identity of the killing intent that was aiming at Celis and he reacted.

"——Watch out-!"

Lux kicked the ground sharply while calling out at the same time.

"Lux!? Why are you here——!?"

On the other hand, Celis who was called out also held her breath in realization.

There was an EX Drake that was hiding its figure using the camouflage function.

The aim of that cannon muzzle that was filled with attack readiness already locked on Celis who was standing still in surprise.

Without even any time to think about the true identity of the Drag-Knight that he had slight recognition of, Lux ran in order to cover for Celis.

Right after that, the torrent of shockwave that was fired from the Cannon blew away a part of the ground.

"—!?"

Their body floated with a sensation of their body weight vanishing.

‘Damn it!’ His consciousness was getting farther without even any time to regret.

The last thing he saw was a man other than Wade.

It was a short statured assassin. His whole face was filled with an ugly smile.

The low scale destruction that ocured at the outskirt of the Academy.

Lux and Celis were taken away from that place without anyone noticing.

Chapter 4 – The Steel Witch

Part 1

He could hear a dull and heavy striking sound from afar.

Then the sensation of rope coiling around the body and the cold texture of stone.

His consciousness was receding for a moment—then it was surfacing along with the passing of time.

"U, uu....."

The place was dim—no, there was almost no light in his field of vision. Lux opened his eyes amidst the darkness.

He noticed that it was because of the blindfold covering his eyes, but he could barely peek at his surrounding from the slightest opening at the top and bottom of the blindfold.

The room was illuminated by sunlight that shined in from the skylight that was covered with grid pattern.

Lux and Celis were imprisoned inside that old room that was made from stone.

Both of them got their eyes blindfolded with their four limbs tightly bound by rope.

It wasn't like he was completely unable to move, but this was quite the predicament.

"Celis-senpai, are you alright!?"

".....I'm alright. More importantly, how about you Lux?"

They first confirmed each other's safety after recovering their consciousness.

Perhaps because they were both in an emergency situation, they were able to talk naturally like before this.

His body felt painful and numb due to the after wave of the Cannon shockwave that showered them, but at worst it only felt like he was just got lightly punched. There was nothing wrong with his bones.

Celis also told him that she wasn't injured or bleeding.

For now, it seemed they were at least safe.

"But, where could this be? It doesn't seem like.....we are outside the Academy."

When they focused their hearing, it was faint—really faint, but the bustling sound of the campus festival could be heard from afar.

Then, Celis whose eyes were still blindfolded thought for a bit and muttered.

"It's only my guess.....but, I think we might be inside the old underground prison within the Academy's ground."

Celis muttered that with a calm tone despite her perplexity.

"If I remember rightly, this Academy was a military installation in the era of old empire, so naturally it should also have a lot of underground prison. Although the majority of it seemed to be demolished when this place was turned into academy."

"So this is a remain of the jail where I was placed when I was first caught here....."

Lux muttered with a conflicted expression.

The remains of the underground prison that was demolished and its entrance blocked.

That possibility was high based from the old smell his nose caught.

But, if that was the case the options of the person who put Lux and Celis in here were limited.

"Is the enemy....., a staff of the Academy?"

"I don't know but, there is another possibility. The spy of Heiburg who was once hiding amidst us, Syvalles—Saniya. In the note that she left behind, it was written that she also discovered the existence of this jail and its blueprint when she was investigating the location of the crystal called Grand Force."

"Then, could it be——"

An information that was known by Saniya, a spy who was spying on new kingdom.

If she reported that information to her superior, than it could be imagined how this was the work of Heiburg Republic that knew about the existence of this underground prison.

If this was thought as their sabotage, which was done at the end of the campus festival, a few hours before the skill exhibition battle started, then the line could be very easily connected.

"In order to obtain a win without fighting..... Is this the act of Heiburg's Seven Dragon Paladins, Rosa Granhide?"

"She is a possible suspect. We aren't lethally wounded and our Sword Device aren't taken away are because doing that could cause this to be traced to her, so we are left alone like this, but——"

Right now it was nothing but a speculation. For now their priority was to escape from here.

When he looked up to the ceiling from the gap of the blindfold, the distance is quite far.

They tried to call for help several times, but there wasn't any sign that it would reach anyone's ear from this place where there wasn't any human sign.

"But, why did Celis-senpai at that kind of place? Besides, it looked like you were somewhat distracted?"

When Lux asked the thing that bothered him, he received an unexpected answer.

".....Wade-sensei was there. My teacher who should be died because of some words from me, your grandfather, he was..... But, he vanished the moment I reached out my hand. Was that just an illusion that my weak heart showed me?"

Celis muttered sadly.

Indeed, Lux also felt like he was seeing a man's silhouette at that time, but he wasn't certain.

That was why he didn't say anything right now and said only definite thing.

"The moment Celis-senpai's attention was distracted, an EX Drake was aiming at you. Furthermore, I remembered the face of the pilot who seemed to come and go from the Academy yesterday—that's all that I've confirmed clearly. More importantly, we've got to get out from here now and head to the skill exhibition battle."

"You're, right. There is no time to feel down."

The matter of her seeing the illusion of her teacher Wade.

And then, the matter of receiving an attack from someone who made use of that opening which caused the two of them to get captured. Celis was disappointed of herself and worried due to those matters, but she pulled herself together.

Lux let out a sigh of relieve, it was then—,

"By the way Lux. Are you able to move even slightly?"

Celis asked with a serious tone.

"Err....., yes. I cannot untie the rope, but if it's just a bit——"

Inside the cramped prison, there was the figure of Celis with her hands tied behind her right in front of him. Their distance was less than a few cl. (TN: This cl seem to be the equivalent of centimeter here I think)

Until now Lux didn't notice because of nervousness, but somehow the way she was tied was strange.

More specifically, other than her hands were tied behind her and her eyes were blindfolded, her body was also tied.

For some reason, the rope was tied at below and above those conspicuously pointing out voluptuous breasts.

Perhaps it was only that way because that was the easiest way to tie her body, but even if it was only a coincidence, Celis's huge breasts became emphasized due to that into a very risqué shape.

When Lux was peeking at such sight from the slight gap of his blindfold, Celis suddenly leaned her body forward and took a pose that pushed out her breasts toward Lux.

"A, about that. The rope around my torso is connected to the rope tying my hands behind, so can I ask you to pull at it a little? If the restrain on my hand can be loosened slightly, perhaps I will be able to pull out my Sword Device....."

If her hand could reach the handle of her Sword Device, she would be able to cut the rope and summon Drag-Ride to escape from the prison.

Lux understood such intention of Celis, but——,

"E, err, but I too have my hands tied, only my mouth can move....."

Lux said in fluster while reminding Celis casually.

"Ye, yes..... That's why I'm, asking you. Tha, that.....it it's Lux, I won't mind so——"

"-.....!?"

But, unexpectedly a reply of 'OK' came back and Lux's face turned red.

Lux would use his mouth to pull at the rope that was tied above and below Celis's breasts, in other words—, there was a possibility his face would touch those jiggling pointing out breasts.

He got the feeling as though he would do some kind of thing that he absolutely mustn't do, but was this really okay?

But, there weren't many things they could do in this situation where their body couldn't be moved.

Lux took a deep breath and he finally resolved himself.

"U, understood. E, excuse me——!"

Lux raised his spirit, he leaned forward his upper body with his eyes still blindfolded, and his face moved toward the area around the breast of Celis who was similarly tied up.

The gap at Lux's blindfold was slight. He couldn't ascertain his target clearly.

Furthermore the nearer he got, the more his field of vision was stolen by the largeness of the breasts. He became unable to see anything.

And so, at the end he resolutely bit at the two ropes that held the breasts from above and below.

(—Yosh!)

His nose tip and cheek came into contact with a soft sensation, but he boldly bit at the cord and strongly pulled.

"Lu, Lux-.....!? Tha, that place is-!?"

It seemed Celis was agitated, her body was shaking from discomfort.

‘This is bad’, Lux was flustered.

The nice smell of a faint perfume aroma and the sweet sensation of the smooth skin.

He wanted to stay there forever. He wanted to taste it even deeper. Such impulses were welling up inside him.

Judging that he wouldn’t be able to back off at this rate, Lux aimed to settle this within a short term and he pushed his face daringly.

"Ah.....!?"

Snap- The sound of something snapping came out. Lux’s face was pulled away.

(I did it. —Looks like the cord on the chest came off.)

Lux was relieved inside his heart and he took a breath.

At the same time, perhaps because he was drawing back his head vigorously, the black blindfold covering his eyes slipped even further and the inside of the jail that was still shined by sunlight became clear to see—but,

"—Wait, eeeeh!?"

The moment Lux saw that sight, he opened his mouth in astonishment.

The rope tying Celis’s chest wasn’t snapped. A warm and smooth fabric made a rustling sound and fell from Lux’s mouth.

(The, then just now I, what I pulled out from Celis-senpai’s chest was—)

He would understand even without thinking deeply if he looked.

The rope that was tied on position above and below Celis’s breasts.

Right in the middle between the ropes—, in the valley of the breasts, there was the connecting part of her bra. Lux bit on it and pulled it with his all.

Perhaps the hook on her back was off when she was brought here. When Lux pulled the bra from the front, it seemed the hook lost and the bra was taken away.

As the result, the fight just now ended with only the bra torn off from the breasts of the tied Celis.

"I, I'm sorry Celis-senpai! It shouldn't be like thi——!?"

His failure and the result that was caused from it caused Lux to start apologizing in panic.

"I, I'm fine. You cannot see due to the blindfold, so it cannot be helped. Mo, more importantly, if it's now you won't make mistake again, so one more time——"

On the other hand, Celis was speaking dignifiedly even while her cheeks were reddening in shame.

".....Eh, but——"

Lux was bewildered and hesitating.

Certainly it was just as Celis said, there was no more worry that he would fail, but Celis's appearance had become more that lewd enough already.

Her uniform was opened, exposing her breasts. The voluptuous breast that had already absorbed male's attention even at normal time was now emphasized from the rope's tight binding.

Furthermore because Lux had pulled out her bra, even the tips of the breasts were almost visible.

The proud and beautiful Celis was being restrained by straw rope, with her blushing face looking down in shame.

And then the bulges of raw soft breasts that were emphasized by the rope were jiggling tantalizingly before his eyes.

With this, it would be stranger if his reasoning didn't melt in front of such sight.

In addition, he was told to use his mouth once again to pull at the rope.

In other words after this, his face would be buried between Celis's breasts that weren't covered by bra—.

"He, hesitation is, not permitted.....you know"

When Lux was hesitating, Celis muttered that while leaking out a nervous and also seductive breath.

"It became like this because of my carelessness, and we have to quickly get out from here. So....."

Celis muttered so with her words at the end turning ambiguous.

(—I wonder why. It feels like Celis-senpai is cuter than usual.....)

Perhaps such thought for a senior was impolite, but that was what Lux thought.

He didn't understand the reason why he was avoided, but at the very least right now she was trusting him. Then—,

"I, I'm sorry. Celis-senpai, please endure just for a bit!"

Lux resolved himself and he leaned his body forward to Celis's breasts once more.

Even still, as expected it was beautiful and enchanting.

Lux endured the jiggling temptation before his eyes while opening his mouth to bite at the rope, it was then—,

—

"Lux-kun, Celis-san! Are you two all ri—!?"

ZAGUN-! The sound of hard stone being cut apart could be heard, and the underground prison shook.

"—!?"

The bodies of the two stiffened from surprise. At that timing, a Drag-Knight slashed the ceiling above and came down.

It was a young boy with androgynous appearance and braided hair.

Perhaps he was working in the booth too today, he was wearing butler outfit under the EX Wyvern. He landed down in front of Lux and Celis.

"Coral!? Why are you—"

"I heard from the Triads that they are looking for Lux-kun. Both of you, are you injured?"

Coral who went down on the floor of the underground prison asked that with a serious gaze.

But, the next moment after he stared closely at the appearance of Lux and Celis, his cheeks boiled red in a flash.

"—Eeeee, wha-wha-wha-wha-what are you two doing-!? No, no matter what, doing that in this kind of time, while being tied.....that's"

The cute young boy averted his face. Seeing that, Lux and Celis got flustered together.

"Yo, you are misunderstanding Sir Coral! This is that, it's something that can't be helped in order to escape from here!"

"Tha, that's right! It's not like I and Celis-senpai did anything to feel guilty about—"

"....."

Coral stared fixedly at Lux and Celis with doubtful gaze, even so Coral swung his Sword Device and quickly cut the rope.

Celis wore her bra and fixed her clothes' disarray, after that she and Lux pulled out their respective Sword Device and checked the blade.

"Ho, however it's strange. It seems that our swords aren't tampered at all."

"Me too, both of my swords are fine."

In the first place, Sword Device that was made from a special metal called Mythrildite boasted hardness that no normal blacksmith tool could process it, even so it was possible to destroy it using Drag-Ride's strength.

In that case, was it valid to think that the Sword Devices of the Divine Drag-Rides weren't destroyed because it would be a waste?

The enemy bore the risk of attacking Lux and Celis within the Academy's ground while not going as far as stealing in order to avoid the risk of having the deed traced back to them.

This meant, it wasn't the deed of the Dragon Marauder, as expected—was it the deed of someone public?

While Lux was thinking of such things,

"There is no injury or pain on you two? If you two can fight then let's go quickly! It already passed the time of the start of the skill exhibition battle!"

Coral suddenly spoke in hurry and showed the two of them his pocket watch.

Loss by default due to absence—. A dark despair flashed in their mind for a moment, but it still wasn't a certain thing.

"Let's go Lux. I can fight."

Lux also nodded at Celis's resolute voice.

They hurriedly fixed their appearance and rushed toward the practice ground.

—

Part 2

The Drag-Ride practice ground inside the Academy's site.

It seemed that at the early half of the campus festival yesterday, this place was used to hold a simple show of Drag-Ride practice where normal visitor could enter, but right now there was no one here except Seven Dragon Paladins, the delegation of Lords, and the leaders' representatives.

So to speak, normal visitors and students who weren't Syvalles were forbidden to visit that place.

Four Drag-Knights were facing each other on the circular ground that was the stage of the battle.

The Seven Dragon Paladin of Heiburg Republic, Rosa, and her aide Calensia.

From the new kingdom was similarly a Seven Dragon Paladin, Lux, and his aide Celistia.

"You two are really late aren't you? Originally I could also criticize that disrespectful attitude and obtain victory by default though, right?"

First Rosa provoked with slimy attitude and obscenely mocking smile.

But, Calensia who was following behind Rosa was composed all that time. She quietly pushed up the glasses that was her trait to fix its position.

"But by doing that, we won't be able to fulfill the request of Listelka-sama, an imperial family of the Lords who wish to be shown our strength. In deference to that——"

"I'll have you two accept a condition that is just slightly advantageous for us okay? This is a two versus two battle. The side that has even one of the pair unable to fight first will become the loss of the pair. And then in case the time limit ran out, it won't be a draw but a victory of us, the representatives of Heiburg——can you two accept that I wondeeer?"

Those were the special conditions prepared to compensate for Lux and Celis's lateness.

If thinking about the possibility that they could also lose by default, it was undoubtedly something to be thankful for if it was only a condition of time limit.

Though—that was only if it wasn't Rosa herself who set up the trap for Lux and Celis.

"Then—can we start this now? The sun will set before long after all."

The imperial princess of the Lords, Listelka prompted the fight to begin. Then the four touched their sword belt together.

And then, they slowly unsheathed their Sword Device.

"—Come, the winged dragon of crest, the symbol of power. Obey my sword and soar, Wyvern."

"—Descent. The dragon of royalty who inherit the blood of ruler. Be clad in a hundred lightning and dance in heaven, Lindwurm."

The switch on the handle was pushed and the passcode was chanted, immediately after that—particles of light condensed and formed shape.

Lux used Wyvern following the advance arrangements they had decided beforehand.

He wished to avoid using Bahamut in front of a lot of people at new kingdom where there was rumor of the Black Hero, but in this situation, and in front of the limited audiences here, using Bahamut was an available option.

In this battle for the sake of repelling danger from the new kingdom, he also had to resolve himself to use it.

But, to use the Quick Shot by applying the Divine Raiment of Bahamut, Reload on Fire, there was the necessity to see through the opponent's attack

preliminary movement before activating it.

In order to use it to the maximum effect, as expected it was better to first devote himself at defense.

For that he made the judgment to use Wyvern that had low consumption rate and the Scale Blade that Lisha made, and fought mainly using the counterattack of Critical Hit.

On the other hand, the representative of Heiburg, Calensia was summoning EX Wyrms.

And then at the end, Rosa Granhided pulled out her Sword Device that was engraved with ominous pattern.

"—The soot of wicked artifice, deceive lurking underneath. O repentance dragon of previous existence, Gorynych."

The air of the whole venue was strained from the Divine Drag-Ride's summoning.

A squall whirled behind Rosa, and an odd Drag-Ride with growing blades appeared there.

"So this is the rumored, the Steel Witch's—"

Beside Lux, Celis raised a slightly astonished voice.

Lustrous dark grey color, the armor of steel color that was a mix of black and ash color. The dreary color scheme reminded anyone watching of the original color Mythrildite that was the material of Drag-Ride.

But, there were sharp thorns jutting out from various parts, furthermore the thick armor of land battle type Drag-Ride that was embodiment of sturdiness was displaying its aggressive dignity.

"—Connect – On"

Rosa grinned fearlessly and next she quickly equipped the unfolded armor.

(.....It's huge.)

The Drag-Ride was already huge when it was summoned, but when it was worn by the pilot's body, its volume increased further.

The huge Drag-Ride was a size bigger than the normal
^{Wyrm}land battle type Drag-Ride. A single attack that it unleashed might become a fatal wound in the worst case.

Lux and Celis instantly made that judgment while similarly connecting and wearing their Drag-Ride. They formed the strategy against Rosa inside their head.

"The time limit is ten minutes. If one fighter becomes unable to fight, it will become a defeat for the pair. In case the time ran out, it will become the victory of Heiburg Republic. Other than those special conditions, this battle will be held under the common rule of mock battle. Any objection?"

After Instructor Raigree who acted as the referee informed them that, each of the four fighters nodded.

Celis and Rosa glared at each other with sparks scattering between them. The signal of the battle start was declared then.

—

"—Battle, Start!"

—

At the same time with the signal, the four Drag-Knights quickly moved.

First Lux's Wyvern and Celis's Lindwurm flew backward as though they had arranged it beforehand. The two Drag-Knights of Heiburg drove their Drag-Knight using the wheels to close the distance.

Lux and Celis's situational judgment had reached about the same level.

In the situation where they faced Drag-Knight who used land battle type Drag-Ride, the first thing to do was to make use of flying type's special characteristic and grasped the air superiority.

There was also the risk of attacked from below, but because the opponent's could be restricted to shooting and bombardment, it was obviously advantageous to take position above the opponent.

That was the ironclad rule for flying type Drag-Ride like Wyvern and the like when fighting Drag-Knight using land battle type.

The opponent charging ahead at the start of battle to prevent them from moving to the sky was also as expected in a sense.

Therefore Rosa and Calensia simultaneously aimed and fired at their opponent's by the book action.

"—Fuh!"

"Haah!"

Rosa brandished a sickle shaped weapon with a long handle—, a
Dragon Horn Curved Blade

Scythe and attacked Lindwurm, while Calensia aimed at Lux using medium sized Blade.

Those two took such first move after predicting that Lux and Celis would first took some distance away and flew to the sky.

"—!?"

But in a moment a strange discomfort flashed through at the back of Rosa and Calensia's mind.

Lux and Celis who pretended to escape to the sky stopped flying midway and hovered still at midair.

They conversely aimed at the first attack of Rosa and Celnsia. The two were already finished preparing a sure kill attack.

PAKiiI-!

Along with the high-pitched metallic sound, fragments of weapon and armor fluttered in the air.

The Scale Blade that Lux's Wyvern wielded smashed the Blade of Calensia's EX Wurm, while Celis's Lindwurm unleashed a thrust using its special armament Lightning Lance, which pierced Gorynych's barrier and moved toward the shoulder where its Force Core was installed.

"This is the end. —Lightning Flash."

BASHiiII-!

In a flash, the electric attack surging from the lance's tip attacked Rosa's Gorynych.

"Kuuuh.....!?"

Rosa's expression distorted. At that moment, the girl beside her was shocked.

"This is, a weapon for the sake of destroying weapon!? The first move of flying backward following the established tactic, it was.....a trap!?"

At the other side, Calensia was staring at the Blade's fragment that was smashed by Lux's Critical Hit and she let out an astonished voice.

The counter of Critical Hit using Scale Blade wouldn't work without first seeing through the opponent's attack.

But, just now both sides were each taking option that would normally be the best for the situation.

If it was just a priority movement without any particular scheme it, it would be easy to predict it.

Lux and Celis chose the option of sure kill offense and defense by predicting the opponent's action two moves ahead without discussing with each other beforehand, and then they made it success splendidly.

Part 3

"Nii-san is reckless as usual——"

The skill exhibition battle of Heiburg versus new kingdom, where the right to investigate Ruin was being fought.

Airi was watching the intense beginning while letting out a relieved sigh.

Airi and the Triads split up to search Lux who was suddenly gone before this. They were also specially permitted to watch the battle, so right now they were sitting on the audience seats that were mostly empty.

"Really. To try to settle the fight suddenly like that. Well, certainly, even if they escaped to the sky, it will be a loss when the time's up, so it can't be helped though."

After Tillfur replied like that, Noct also nodded quietly.

"Yes. But, they won the gamble. I don't know what is the power of Rosa Granhide's Gorynych, but in any case, she is caught with this."

The thrust of electricity by Lightning Lance of Celis's Lindwurm—the Lightning Flash possessed special characteristic to temporarily seal the movement of enemy's Drag-Ride.

Calensia only got her Blade destroyed, but Rosa would almost certainly get defeated with one more attack.

Thus, the battle had been decided with the victory went to the new kingdom in reality.

"Aaa. I was worried, but somehow with this——"

When Sharis was about to conclude like that, the nearby Lisha who was also watching like them muttered with a tense expression.

"No. That Drag-Ride, something is strange!?"

At the same time with her sentence, the battle situation that should be clearly in their favor moved.

"Be careful Celis! That thing is fake!"

What could be seen at the same time with Lisha's yell was the figure of Celis along with the golden armor she equipped—Lindwurm getting mowed down altogether by a Scythe.

—

Part 4

"This is——!?"

It was a sight that would make one doubted their own eyes. Lux's focus was taken away for a moment by that happening which surpassed the imagination.

Right after the offense and defense that should have decided the victory for them just as they predicted——, for some reason it was Celis herself who got hit by a sure kill attack.

The Scythe's blade that was tinged with shining purple energy was digging into Lindwurm's torso.

But, the Lance that was slightly tilted came in between, which exempted Celis from direct hit.

"How fuun. To be able to defend against this attack in this timing——just what kind of reaction speed that is? Are you really a human I wonder?"

Rosa who was grinning smugly put even more strength and forcefully swung her Scythe to the end.

The heavy weight land battle type with its feet firmly planted on the ground, and the light weight flying type that was floating midair.

The difference in power when the two clashed directly was clearly shown in this situation.

"Kuh!? My attack should have landed for sure..... Why is a counterattack——!?"

Terrific amount of energy surged from the Scythe's blade, and it increased in momentum to cut apart Lindwurm's barrier.

The armor's destruction——a killing intent that was aiming for more than mere injury caused Lux's expression to pale.

"Celis-senpai!"

Lux immediately tried to assist by brandishing his Scale Blade toward Rosa.

—But, Calensia immediately discarded her half destroyed Blade and obstructed him.

"It's vexing to be ignored like that. —That's your blunder."

At the same time the EX Wyrm quickly switched weapon.

The land battle type Drag-Ride that had its heavyweight class as its selling point was loaded with a lot of armaments. Because of that it possessed a lot of variety.

Next when she aimed the Breath Gun in her hand toward Lux, territory of light spread in the surrounding.

"Divine Gate."

Celis brushed away the Scythe slightly and activated Lindwurm's Divine Raiment, the ability of high speed teleportation.

Celis instantly appeared right beside Rosa and sharply thrust her lance toward Rosa's flank.

DOGAA-! That attack coerced the Drag-Ride's barrier and crushed the shoulder armor.

At the same time, the Scale Blade that Lux swung in the pretension of helping Celis blocked the muzzle of Calensia's Breath Gun.

"The second attack is also a trap—!? How can!?"

But Calensia who had reflexively pulled the trigger couldn't stop, causing the Breath Gun to explode.

The EX Wyrm got hit by the backlash of its second weapon getting destructed and it was pushed back.

Celis too, although she had received an inexplicable counterattack, but with this she was able to bring down Rosa with certainty—that was how it should be. But,

"You aren't half bad. —Just slightly than what I think though."

The Drag-Ride of the sarcastically grinning Rosa was completely destroyed along with the pilot's body.

"Wha-.....!?"

The Lindwurm of Celis who was taken by surprise received a sharp impact on the back and got struck down.

The Gorynych of Rosa that should be at the front was slashing its Scythe from the back before Celis knew it.

"Illusion!? No, I certainly felt feedback—!?"

Sparks were fiercely scattered from Celis's armor while she was muttering in astonishment.

It seemed that her back wings, the flight device was done in. She couldn't fly anymore.

"Calen. You aim at this one who is near dead. Weeell, the punishment for you is decided already though by the time you got done in by such brat twice. What's going to happen if we lose because of your fault—. If it's the clever you, don't you get it already riight? It won't be just your parents, even your little sis will be turned into slave you know?"

"......uu-"

The expression Calensia who was glared by Rosa turned pale. Her shoulders were shaking fiercely.

It seemed the dark side of Heiburg, the inhumanity of Rosa wasn't just a mere rumor.

Her poisonous fang wasn't bared to just the army and citizens it seemed, it even reached her own partner.

(.....This is bad! At this rate we won't win—not just that, Celis-senpai is in danger!)

Lindwurm that already received a serious damage couldn't fight satisfactorily anymore.

At the same time, Rosa Granhide's true strength and also the Divine Raiment of Gorynych were still unknown.

If he wanted to prevent any injury to the minimum, perhaps it would be better to surrender here.

However, of all things if they lost here against Heiburg that was hostile to the new kingdom, the Ruin within the new kingdom's territory would be ransacked for a month and the area around it would receive considerable damage.

".....Fuh."

At that time a chuckle that seemed like it had seen through Lux's complication came from the audience seats far away.

It was a distance where something like a muttering voice couldn't possibly be heard.

But, Lux felt like he had certainly heard it.

The face of his elder brother Fugil who was sneering.

That laughing voice which sounded like it was scorning his choice and the end of that road caused his emotion to erupt.

"Some nerve you've got there—. No, is it a lure perhaps? You don't have any tome to leisurely look at other way you know"

Rosa who was showing a wicked smile drew near to Lux while brandishing her Scythe.

At that instant, Lux resolved himself and instantly dispelled his own armor.

"Howling Howl! And then —Break Purge."

It was a basic skill to shoot out the energy that was gathered in the head part in a surge. But, just that wasn't enough to contain the charge of Gorynych that was a land battle type Divine Drag-Ride.

Therefore Lux used one more technique, the Break Purge to shoot out his armor as buckshot to cover the enemy's field of vision.

It was a basic operation skill to purge off a part of Drag-Ride's armament and armor and reduced the burden to oneself.

But, the barrier's strength and the mobility were also shaved off at the same time, so it was almost never get used in the middle of combat.

Lux daringly use it was for the sake of taking the enemy by surprise and stopping her movement.

And then, at the same time it was also a preparatory step to use the next Drag-Ride.

"Releasing off the armor completely!? This is....."

"Lux!? That Drag-Ride is—!?"

Celis leaked out an astonished voice, but Lux didn't stop.

The other Sword Device—the second one was pulled out from the black sheath and he quickly muttered the Passcode.

"—Manifest, violent dragon devouring the flesh and blood of the gods. Sever the sky of black clouds, Bahamut!"

Right after he yelled, a large type Drag-Ride shining jet black was summoned before his eyes. It covered Lux's body and turned into armor.

The people in the audience seats who witnessed that spontaneously leaked out astonished sighs.

"—Oo"

"So that's, the Divine Drag-Ride of new kingdom's Seven Dragon Paladins."

There was no common student or visitor in this place.

The people watching the fight were only Syvalles's members and Relie, also the other members of Seven Dragon Paladins and the four leaders' representatives.

Even so, Lux didn't want to show his own combat strength openly, but there was no more room for hesitating.

He still wasn't able to perfectly predict the opponent's attack preliminary movement, but even so he could only do this.

".....Remaining times, three minutes."

The voice of Instructor Raigree who served as the referee resounded at the surrounding.

Celis who received damage shouldn't have much time remaining where she could equip her Drag-Ride.

Lux faced the Gorynych that possessed large dark grey frame and flew Bahamut forward.

"So that's the rumored Bahamut? I have heard of it from Saniya."

Right after she muttered so, Rosa snapped her fingers with a clear sound.

Instantly, with a force that was like a bullet, Calensia who should be taking on Celis as an opponent aimed at Lux with a slash using her second Blade.

Trickery—deception and trap, and overwhelming strength. This was a witch who freely used all of those.

Her instruction that told Calensia to face Celis was a groundwork to make a sneak attack toward Lux.

But, the Blade of the EX Wyrn that was aiming at Bahamut's armored arm instead got severed along with its armored hand. The severed part rotated in the air.

Quick Draw—the super fast attack that was unleashed from aligned operation of body control and mental control dealt the counterattack splendidly.

"No way-.....!?"

Calensia opened both her eyes widely, then right after that Lux quickly struck a return attack at her.

Slashed from above the barrier, Calensia's EX Wyrn was blown away.

"Hee? You use a strange technique there. It's not that Bahamut's Divine Raiment. Is that perhaps a technique of Drag-Ride operation just like Singlen I wonder?"

Rosa threw that comment with deep interest.

She was thinking to aim at opening the moment Lux attacked her in this timing, but unexpectedly Lux didn't come attacking.

"You are more able than I thought..... But you're really naïve. Even though this fight will be over if you attack Calen more and make her unable to fight, and yeet"

"....."

Rosa pointed out something painful, but Lux didn't let it show on his expression.

In case this battle ended in defeat for Heiburg because of Calensia as the cause, she would receive terrible chastisement from Rosa, and her family would receive persecution. It was a fact that such thought crossed Lux's mind for a moment.

But, the Steel Witch saw through even that hesitation of Lux. It caused Lux to hold a strong vigilance against her.

Until now there had been several Drag-Knights who Lux thought as formidable, but this girl's 'malice' possessed strength of different quality from those opponents.

Not only she didn't balk to sacrifice her own comrade, she also had the shrewdness to form strategy that influenced her opponent.

He understood it keenly, of her inhuman strength.

"Feeling concerned about the position of a woman from another country that you will even harm the interest of your own countr—I love such person who has their head filled with flower field like that you know?"

Rosa licked her lips and caressed her breast with her fingertip while grinning mockingly.

"Actually my partner Calen—, among the nobles she was born from lowly family, but she is a lovely child who overturn status using talent and hard work seee. But, she is an embarrassment for Heiburg, getting pitied by someone of another country like this. That's why....., let's see. I'll have this girl's remaining family to receive punishment too. I'll present her mother and little sister to be the plaything of the soldiers."

"—!?"

Rosa made a cruel and inhumane declaration.

The moment Calensia looked dumbfounded from surprise, a sound burst from Rosa's back.

"Break Purge—and then, Divine Gate."

The moment Celis saw an opening, she released a part of her armor and moved.

A swift attack in godspeed that the eye couldn't even follow.

Celis lightened her burden by purging parts of the armor that were damaged, at the same time she concentrated her energy into one point to launch a lance attack.

It was a form of suicide attack that Celis was learning by applying basic technique.

It was a superb sure-kill skill that put the user's life at risk. Such attack was attacking Rosa's back.

At the same time Lux also flew his Bahamut and slashed in order to support Celis.

If he launched a slash using Quick Draw at this distance and this timing, even Rosa wouldn't be able to dodge.

Those judgment and prediction hit the mark without any miss. Gorynych was pierced from the back, at the same time it was also slashed diagonally from the front—.

The armor along with the flesh body wearing it were bisected into two.

".....Wha-!?"

Lux and Celis were dumbfounded seeing that sight. Right at that moment, that flesh body dispersed.

It wasn't illusion, but a clone with physical substance.

Right after Lux noticed that, an intense impact and heat wave were fired from the side of the two who was right near each other as though to strike them hard.

Flash Shadow of Deceit – All-Out Bombardment Form

"Sin Phantom – Rapid Fire Mode."

DOOOOohN-!

The air exploded in succession. The ground was smashed and hot wind whirled.

The yell of Lisha and others could be heard from afar inside the inferno where it felt like their consciousness was getting farther.

"Lux——!?"

"Hah! Even though I shot at perfect timing——it's only your running away that is fast isn't it?"

After Rosa laughed mockingly, the dust cleared up and a figure came into view.

It was the figure of Lux's Bahamut, protecting Celis who only had slightly remaining armor within its arms.

Lux and also Celis could still fight even though it was only just barely.

But, in Celis's condition that almost couldn't move anymore, there would be a risk of serious injury or even death if they kept fighting.

"Lux, don't worry about me! That's why——!"

"I'm sorry, Celis-senpai."

Lux shook his head slightly toward Celis's insistence.

And then the time passed, and the result of this skill exhibition battle was decided.

"——The time is up. This match.....is a draw!"

Instructor Raigree's voice came, at the same time the bell sound that informed the end of the battle rang.

A draw in reality had the same meaning as victory for Heiburg Republic.

And then the fight that began from this quarrel closed its curtain.

—

Part 5

"-.....!? What's with that Drag-Ride.....! Its shape is completely different from just now——"

The huge figure of Gorynych that appeared from the dust cloud caused Airi to hold her breath on the audience seat.

Then, Magialca who was sitting beside her smiled with a convinced expression.

"——I see, that Divine Drag-Ride, it appears its form is transformed into Drag-Ride of various shapes depending on its own special armaments."

"To be more accurate, it's from the combination of its Divine Raiment and special armament though."

From the other side of the whirling inferno, Rosa who was clad in Gorynych that was equipped with ten-odd cannon muzzles faced toward Magialca and informed her the answer.

"The special armaments ^{Twelve Iron Cage} Twelve Vice——its ability to operate several unmanned general-purpose Drag-Ride, and Sin Phantom——creating mechanical illusion of a fake me that I overlapped on the unmanned Drag-Rides, this combination produced pseudo clones of me."

Rosa faced the audience seat and explained her own skill.

"Rearranging and transforming armors that are treated as special armaments. At the same time it also produce my own clones——this is the power of Divine Raiment that my Gorynych possess, the true shape of ^{Purgatory Mechanism} Tartaros Frame."

"I see, that's why you are the Steel Witch. Certainly it's interesting, but it's really lavish of you to expose everything here."

Singlen who was similarly sitting on the audience seat at the opposite side spoke with a fearless smile.

But, Rosa looked like she wasn't perturbed at all. She was only showing a crooked smile.

"I don't really care. After all those Lords know about it anyway. Besides even if the trick of my Divine Raiment is exposed, it's still not something that anyone can do anything about. More importantly, are you fine with this, tyrant-sama? The Ruin investigation right is taken by me you know? If I also conquered even Babel after this, perhaps even all of you will be below me in the achievement obtained."

".....!?"

The surrounding was stirred in agitation after hearing what Rosa said.

The haughty and arrogant man called the Blue Tyrant, who was a powerful person that stood out even among the Seven Dragon Paladins. The leaders' representatives held their breath seeing Rosa provoking such man.

"Ro, Rosa-dono!? Please stop with the joke——"

As expected, even a senior statesman of Heiburg, Gunius was also agitated. He tried to remonstrate Rosa in panic.

But, in comparison Singlen only sent Rosa a dark gaze that was like a bottomless swamp without any change. He stood up with unshakeable smile.

"You churl, don't push your luck."

The one who said that wasn't Singlen himself, but the tall and lean old soldier standing behind him, Zweigbergk.

Bloodshot eyes peeked out from the helmet's gap, and his hand was touching his Sword Device.

"I'll gratefully accept your loyalty—but, stop it Zwei. As the vice captain of Seven Dragon Paladins, I have the responsibility to watch over their

growth."

Singlen stopped him with one hand. Seeing that, Roza's lips distorted repulsively.

"Myy? What a splendid thing to say despite being a coward who wouldn't come forward to participate in the skill exhibition battle after getting cold feet. An incompetent superior whose style is to exert all his effort in making excuse—it's great how easy it is to understand you."

"Ple, please stop with the reckless remarks Lady Rosa! Si, Sir Singlen, please forgive her, it still hasn't been long since she return to the military——"

Minister Gunius tried to smooth over the situation in great panic, but Singlen wasn't perturbed in the slightest.

Perhaps seeing that the situation was going out of control, the captain Magialca cut in.

"It's not like what she is saying is wrong so just leave it alone. More importantly, the fight is finally settled. It's also necessary to treat the injury, so let's breakup for the moment. I too am tired from the long journey. Can you allow me to rest soon, Relie?"

'Fuua.....', she cutely yawned. Magialca made a forced yawn like a fawning cat and concluded the happening like that.

"Yes, I guess. You were playing wholeheartedly at the campus festival before this though."

"Oh, was that so? Recently I kept forgetting things——wait, who are you calling old!?"

""

Right after that conversation that wasn't reading the mood, the leader of the Lords who wished for this skill exhibition battle, Listelka stood up.

"Please calm down the two of you. We are compatriots. Let's refrain from pointless quarrel among ourselves."

It wasn't clear whether Rosa consented with those words, but she dispelled her armor and Zweigbergk also sat down.

And then the Steel Witch withdrew to outside the practice ground with leisurely footsteps.

"I'm sorry, Lux. Because of my fault——"

"No, I'm glad that Celis-senpai is safe."

Celis looked down. In respond Lux replied with a gentle smile, but the fact was that during one month from here, Heiburg would be monopolizing the conquering effort of Babel.

The damage from Abyss due to the after effect of that investigation as well as the defense that would be needed in case Ragnarok went outside would always exist as threat toward the new kingdom during that time.

Regarding this case, there was also a possibility that Lux and Celis would be asked to take responsibility in some kind of manner, but it was no use even if they thought about it here.

When Lux who was thinking that averted his gaze, he saw on Celis's upper arm a faint bruise remaining there.

Because Celis was wearing a white coat on her pilot suit until right before the match, Lux didn't notice it until now.

"——E, excuse me-!"

Celis who got that bruise seen ran away in a flustered state from that place. Then the Lords, everyone of Seven Dragon Paladins, and the leaders' representatives also left the audience seats.

"....."

Lux wished to think that his judgment to protect Celis instead of taking the option to attack at the end wasn't mistaken.

It would be too dangerous to make a gamble and attack Rosa in that situation.

Conversely if he attacked the weak Calensia mercilessly and defeated her, then perhaps they would be able to obtain victory through that.

Even if because of that Calensia and her family would meet a tragic fate from Rosa, perhaps he shouldn't go as far as pitying even the military officer of other country.

However—.

'That righteousness that is unable to sacrifice even a single relative, unable to discard anything. Your ephemeral ideal that is trying to save even the evil, I'll root for it from the bottom of my heart.'

That smile of Fugil that was containing pity and disappointment was constricting Lux's heart tightly.

In the end, he hadn't change at all since that time.

Wasn't he only clinging on his own ideal while running through the wrong path?

Even after living for five years doing chores, in the end wasn't he still unable to understand people's feeling?

"I....., I, just what am I—"

"Are you all right, Nii-san!?"

Airi, along with Lisha, Krulcifer, Philuffy, and the Triads were rushing toward Lux.

"Yes, sorry to make all of you worry."

But Lux was aware that currently he was making a forced smile that didn't come from his heart.

That was just like the childhood him in the era of old empire.

It was a glossing over smile that he showed at that time when he was living by hiding his true feeling.

The skill exhibition battle silently closed the curtain without the festival visitors and other students getting told about the result.

After receiving the minimum treatment at the medical office, Lux returned to the campus festival as though nothing had happened. And then the sun sunk down.

—

Part 6

At seven o'clock in the evening—after dinner, the night of the middle of autumn.

At that time when the darkness was starting to deepen, a girl's silhouette was facing the headmaster office.

"Excuse me."

The person knocked and informed her presence. Then when she entered, there was Relie sitting down with a smile.

"My? Thank you for your hard work today. There will be a holiday used for the tidying up, so it's still fine not to be that rushed you know?"

"You are the same like always, headmaster."

Celis smiled wryly at Relie's jesting tone.

Thinking back, she who was straight-laced at the root sometimes would also think 'this person is playing around' about Relie. But right now she was thankful with her affable attitude.

"I believe headmaster know about my intention. I wish to take responsibility for the result this time by resigning from the position of an aide of Seven Dragon Paladins."

When Celis said that with a dejected air, Relie let out a breath and smiled bitterly.

"The youngsters these days are overly serious aren't there? Even someone like me is staying unashamedly as headmaster after committing a mistake that great. What you did was for the sake of helping the new kingdom itself, it was something that someone had to do. Besides at times a match is a matter of luck. In fact the two of you obtained a draw——"

"I got captured by someone because I had my focus distracted by unnecessary thing. If not for that, we wouldn't be forced to fight under those disadvantageous conditions. As expected, the cause of our defeat was because of my immature heart. That is my conclusion."

"Regarding that suspicious 'enemy', that matter too is still being investigated even now. It won't be too late to make your decision after the result come out."

Relie ran her pen smoothly on her paperwork while speaking dispassionately.

But, Celis took a deep breath, then she presented the letter that had her notice of resignation from being the aide written inside in front of Relie.

"I'm grateful for your consideration. But—the current me have no more confidence to continue being Lux's aide."

Because when she was at Lux's side, her heart wouldn't be able to calm down for some reason.

She saw the phantom of Wade while she still didn't understand the cause of it, and then her opening at that moment was taken advantage of.

She couldn't continue being Lux's aide while her condition was still like this.

".....I understand. Then I will hold on to this letter."

"Please. Then——"

After saying that briefly, Celis turned around and headed toward the courtyard.

She basked in the night's wind in order to sort her feeling.

—

Part 7

Around the same time. Inside the Academy's ground, in front of the fourth Drag-Ride hangar.

Perhaps it was an attack that could be noticed.

The Academy was designated as the place for the summit, so a lot of reinforcement from the surrounding area was deployed to Cross Field.

The whole area round the Academy was constantly watched by the Drake's detector, the security for the important people staying in the government office building at first block was also flawless.

Furthermore, all the members of Seven Dragon Paladins, the Drag-Knights who were positioned at the top of their respective country were assembled.

The possibility of Cross Field getting attacked in this situation was exceedingly low.

The likes of bandits or average Abyss would get the table turned on them if they came, even the Dragon Marauder wouldn't dare to attack.

The soldiers in that place couldn't assert that they didn't have such conceit and that they didn't let their guard down.

But, even so the defending soldiers—the male Drag-Knights who belonged to the new kingdom military weren't negligent in carrying out security like they were told.

If there was something that they could be blamed about, there was only one thing.

It was how they didn't consider even at the slightest of the possibility that a threat that surpassed the extent of their assumption would visit.

In other words, the main troops of Dragon Marauder tonight easily surpassed their naïve assumption.

At the sky far above the Academy where the detector of new kingdom military's Drake couldn't reach.

That man was hovering while leading a force of Wyverns.

"—What irony. The gathering of elites where each one of them is a mighty warrior, turn into a foolish bunch when they are assembled together. Thanks to that the chance of a counterattack also came to us."

Tanned swarthy skin peeked out from under the pilot suit.

The person's muscular large body and toned appearance would give masculine impression to anyone who saw him.

One of Dragon Marauder's three bosses, the Heavenly Dragon division commander Gatouhan was looking down to the Academy at night.

No, his aim wasn't the Academy itself.

The Drag-Ride hangar inside the Academy ground was reflected on those eyes that were heavily filled with strong will.

The two arms and back of the large type Divine Drag-Ride the man was wearing had countless bizarre 'eggs' on them.

The eggs' shell was blue and half-transparent. They were two sizes bigger than human's head.

The eggs' inside was strangely wriggling. His subordinates behind him were also carrying eggs to the limit.

"Hmm. But, that's not all right? Of course there is also these guys being careless, but this will be still impossible without the guidance of the 'collaborator'. I think that kind of conceit isn't good you know, Gatouhan?"

A youth who was still young was holding on the leg of Gatouhan's Drag-Ride. His cherubic face looked up to Gatouhan and told him that.

"You are an uncute guy as usual. —But, I'll be troubled if you aren't like that when you are chosen to be the Earth Dragon Division Commander, as a

skilled Drag-Knight who equaled me and Drakkhen."

It was a praise toward his comrade that was slightly roundabout, but the youth in question was curt.

"Stop with the flattery and let's start. The guards below aren't just scarecrow, we don't know when we might get noticed. The moon will be hidden by the cloud soon. We will act at that moment. I'll be responsible for the diversion."

"Got it. We will go as planned—let's go! Vine!"

The large man Gatouhan gave the signal. At the same time, the 'eggs' were dropped from the Wyvern force midair.

The eggs impacted the rooftop of the Drag-Ride hangar. The shells broke one after another and the inside spilled out.

—

Part 8

"And done. Well, this should be enough. For now there is no doubt that it can at least move."

On the other hand, inside the Drag-Ride atelier where the brief tidying up of the display items had been finished.

Lisha who was wearing white robe let out a large sigh and stretched her back.

"Forgive me for making you work right after the festival, Lisha-sama."

Lux said that in appreciation of the trouble that the princess he served went through while brewing the tea that he received from the dining hall.

After taking a sip of the tea, Lisha tapped Lux's shoulder with frankness.

"Well, it can't be helped. Those mechanic fellows will also return at this time. At this period of time we will want to avoid you all being unable to use your Drag-Rides because they haven't been repaired."

The fourth Drag-Ride hangar that was inside the Academy ground was closed, and the outside was strictly guarded by soldiers.

Most of the Divine Drag-Rides of the Seven Dragon Paladins who were assembled this time were put inside that important section where even the students were forbidden to enter.

Lisha had moved Lux's Bahamut and Celis's Lindwurm from the fourth Drag-Ride hangar into an atelier outside to repair them.

Though the two Divine Drag-Rides were in a state that couldn't be summoned right away because the system tuning still hadn't been done to them.

"Ho, however I'm feeling somewhat tired. That, at this kind of time, it will help if I can receive a massage....."

Lisha stole a glance at Lux while saying that with expectation.

"Ah, yes. If Lisha-sama is fine with me——"

When Lux reflexively responded like that, Lisha secretly clenched her fist and muttered "Yosh".

(It's a bit embarrassing but, so, sometimes I have to be at least this bold. Besides—I'm also a bit interested of it.)

Lisha took off her robe leaving only her uniform. She then laid down face first on a nearby sofa. Lux started massaging her mainly on her shoulders, neck, and around her back.

"Nn, ku..... You're skilled as expected. That, it feels really good."

"Thank you very much. As I thought, Lisha-sama's muscles are quite stiff."

Seeing Lisha responding with a pleased look, Lix too replied happily.

Lisha had heard that the relationship of man and woman could also be deepened by touching each other's body. She was satisfied that it seemed it wasn't mistaken.

From Lisha's standpoint, her competitive heart was blazing after she heard how recently Krulcifer was approaching Lux strongly but, 'Perhaps this is overdoing it a bit?' she felt embarrassed after this late.

Having her body massaged by an opposite sex who was in her mind—no, by a man who she was self-aware that she liked him felt unexpectedly pleasant. She was relaxing more than she thought.

(I, it also feel just slightly indecent though. But, just this much should be fine shouldn't it? I'm not lying that I'm tired, besides Lux, he is also my knight——)

Inside her heart was pounding fast while thinking of such thing. It was then Lux was also harboring a bewildered feeling.

Lisha had a small build and slender, but she was a girl who was hiding strong zeal inside.

As though to substantiate that impression of Lux, the springy skin that he was massaging was warm and pushing back on his fingers with pleasant elasticity.

Her breasts that were large for her small build were pressed on the sofa. Their existences were asserted through her back.

Her white thighs were well-fleshed, coupled with the constriction of her waist, a smooth line until her butts was highlighted, her skirt was lifted riskily, it even felt like her underwear would become visible.

Lisha herself was completely oblivious, but this accidental ignorant state of hers tickled Lux's emotion.

(Wait, just what am I thinking at this kind of time.....!? Even though I have to do something quickly about Celis-senpai——)

Lux was reflecting on his worldly thoughts while shaking himself free from them. Then he continued the massage thoroughly.

But, when his hand descended until around her waist, Lisha twitched and her body turned stiff.

"E, err, should I finish this here? Soon it will be only the waist left——"

"I, it's not really a problem to continue further right? That, it's just a massage anyway....."

Lisha was talking with such prickly tone. Even Lux understood that she was a bit embarrassed.

If he massaged her waist, his hand might touch until her butt from there.

(Calm down me! Even though I'm her exclusive knight, how can I have a dirty thought about Lisha-sama! At this kind of time, think about a different situation and maintain calm——)

Lux was shaken, but he immediately worked his brain to repress himself.

Then, he suddenly recalled a similar situation. He imagined it to distract himself from this situation.

"Come to think of it, I was once in a situation similar like this with Celis-senpai too. At that time it was worse though....."

"By, by worse you mean——"



"Yes. Previously when I massaged her like this that time, senpai was naked—wait, I was mistaken! It's nothing-!?"

".....-!?"

The moment Lux spontaneously regretted the slip of his tongue, Lisha was instantly petrified.

And then she lifted up her body in a flash and turned around with dark aura drifting out from her.

"—Just what have you done in a place that I don't know!? This, damned pervert!"

Lisha became teary eyed and brandished her Sword Device that was still sheathed inside the scabbard.

After that Lux needed fifteen minutes to talk about the past and matter soothed down Lisha.

—

Part 9

About that time—in front of the Drag-Ride hangar.

The black colored viscous liquid that was mixing into darkness—Chaff Slimes were dropped on the rooftop and began to cover the whole building with its mucus.

Earth Dragon division commander Vine who jumped down toward the Academy ground active his land battle type Divine Drag-Ride.

"Wha—!? Who the hell are you-!?"

"Dragon Marauder huh, then—gugah!?"

Vine wordlessly attacked the guard Drag-Knights who were bewildered seeing the sudden intruder.

Although, he wasn't launching lethal attack, but lightly hindering the soldiers using Wire Tails.

"We came here to receive a certain thing. You will allow us to search it."

After telling that with a curt expression, he skated his Drag-Ride on the ground and left from there.

It would be troubling if he showed his strength too much and the Seven Dragon Paladins got called, so he moved only to attract attention.

"The enemy is only one! Cut off the escape path and surround him!"

The soldiers of new kingdom military yelled that. Satisfied of that fact, Vine ran around in a circle at that area for a while.

Vine was devoting himself to evasion. Then ten seconds later, the Wyvern force of Dragon Marauder also descended.

"Hahahah! As expected from nobles, even their elites are nothing much!"

The vigorous and energetic men of Dragon Marauder readied their respective weapon and attacked.

".....Reinforcement!? Then we are going to come at them with our whole army too! All hands, draw your sword!"

The captain of the guard soldiers raised his voice loudly, then the soldiers who still came running drew out their Sword Device simultaneously.

But, even after they muttered the Passcode, their Drag-Ride didn't appear in front of them.

"——!? What's the meaning of this, why can't we summon Drag-Ride!?"

"Hah! Bunch of fools-! Die helplessly like that!"

The soldiers were shaken. In contrast the Dragon Marauder force fired their Breath Gun.

At the shadow of the Drag-Ride hangar where the beacon of the battle starting was raised, there was Airi who was present there by chance. She felt a shudder rising through her body.

"This black Abyss....., it's the Chaff Slime that Nii-san mentioned.....!?"

The new type Abyss that obstructed the Drag-Ride's control signal, at the same time it would entwine around Drag-Ride and hindered the movement.

Most likely a large amount of this Abyss was dropped on the rooftop of Drag-Ride hangar and then they covered the surface.

It didn't matter even if the powerful Drag-Rides were safe, if they couldn't be summoned then they wouldn't serve any purpose.

The Divine Drag-Rides of Seven Dragon Paladins that were temporarily deployed to here also couldn't be moved.

This was bad. Airi who instantly discerned the danger tried to run away, it was then that thing appeared.

"You are——!?"

The Drag-Knights of Dragon Marauder and new kingdom military who started fighting each other.

During that time, a beautiful girl wearing pure white dress was standing.

Her smooth and silky silver hair that reached until her shoulder and her blue eyes that were like jewel.

That out of place existence that suddenly appeared out of nowhere didn't move at the slightest even though it was in a battlefield where light bullets and blades roared. It was only smiling.

".....Huh!? Who are you!?"

"This place is dangerous! Get away right——"

That standing figure that wasn't running away or even looking scared agitated the men of both sides.

At that time, the girl's mouth opened wide, and a terrible shriek surged out.

"——IIIIIIIIIIiIIiIIIIIIIAAAAAAAAAAAaAH!"

".....GUAAH!?"

The shriek that shook the atmosphere hit hard the eardrums of anyone who heard it.

(This crying voice, it's——horn flute!?)

The moment Airi thought of that at the corner of her head, the roar that was resounding for a few seconds stopped.

But, at the same time the tune of the horn flute remained behind like an echo. It was began to get emitted from the body of that girl.

It was as though her very body itself was a cicada shaking its body to play the tune. That human shaped devil was continuing to emit the demonic

reverberation that called the Abyss.

"Wha, what is this girl!? She isn't human!?"

"Eei, doesn't matter. If she is getting in our way then kill her!"

The new kingdom military and Dragon Marauder each raised their voice fearfully.

"You? What are you——"

Airi reflexively questioned the girl from her hiding.

The moment the girl in dress grinned fearlessly, Airi suddenly recalled a story that she once heard and she shuddered.

"Conflict, killing intent, malice are confirmed. Annihilating the area from here on, bringing salvation."

The girl's eyes were tinged with mysterious glint at the same time with that mutter.

Furthermore tentacles with sharp end grew from her whole body and they undulated like whip.

"This is——!?"

Airi was horrified by that repulsive transformation.

The reverberation that resembled the tone color of horn flute was emitted without any sign of stopping. That sound was gradually increasing in loudness.

"It's calling Abyss? Even though it has the form of human, how——!?"

"Watch out-!"

A tentacle was lashed toward Airi. It was then someone flew from the side and carried her off.

Airi was surprised by the impact. Right after that, she saw the face of the girl who rescued her.

"Celis—senpai?"

"Please be careful Airi. That thing isn't normal."

Celis informed Airi so with a tense face.

She withdrew her rapier shaped Sword Device and faced the mystery girl with vigilance—but, her expression was instantly clouded.

"What's the matter Celis? Did you see something bad, my proud disciple?"

"Wade, sensei....."

The figure of the unknown existence transformed into the shape of her teacher in the past.

Right after tentacles grew out once more from its whole body and they scattered everywhere to the surrounding.

—

Part 10

".....Good grief. Just when I thought that you became quiet recently, but your perverted mind hasn't actually changed at all."

Lisha somehow settled down after Lux explained that the incident with Celis was because he got caught into a trap.

But, in the end the atmosphere wasn't suitable to continue the massage anymore and the two switched to talking with each other.

When the talk shifted from the incident into the matter of Celis, Lisha abruptly started the talk.

"—And, you've been making a depressed face since some time ago, was it because of Celis?"

"Eh.....?"

Lux's thinking froze for a moment because Lisha suddenly hit the bull's eye.

After that battle where he and Celis got a draw against Rosa and her aide, he shouldn't be making a gloomy face, but—.

"Lux, don't underestimate me too much okay? Even I have been lying for a long time. When I look at mirror, I can at least understand what kind of smile I made at that time. And also the bitterness that made me have to smile like that even by forcing it."

"Lisha, sama....."

After Lisha who was once taken hostage by the old empire got abandoned by her father Count Atismata, she was rescued—and placed as the princess of the new kingdom as the daughter of the proud great man.

Even while thinking that she didn't have the qualification, she had to act the role for that position no matter what.

That was why, she couldn't bear to look at Lux who was forcefully making a smile and she told him that.

"Besides it's not like you. If it's the usual you, you will go to console Celis even if you have to be forceful right? Personally I don't mind if you don't do anything like that but....., why are you hesitating only at this time?"

Lux smiled bitterly at Lisha who said that looking somewhat irritated.

"I became unable to understand myself, whether doing that will be the right thing to do or not."

And then, he slowly spoke out his feeling.

"Since that time five years ago, I caused a lot of people at the old empire's side to die and became chore prince, I've been puzzled all this time. Why did my elder brother Fugil betrayed me, or else, was he tricking me right from the start and only using me?"

He met Lisha at such time and he was given a new place to belong and purpose.

He chose the path of being Seven Dragon Paladins in order to fight for the sake of people who believed in him, this time for sure.

But,

"And yet, when I met again with Nii-san.....with Fugil at the summit, my feeling wavered. Perhaps in the end I'm still the same like in the past. Perhaps in the end I don't understand a single thing about people's feeling. When I thought that....., I who was unable to help Celis-senpai just now, became unable to understand, how should I talk to her——"

""

Lux expressed his distress slowly. Lisha observed him for a while silently, and then she suddenly moved her hand.

Slap Her palm lightly patted Lux's cheek without the slightest strength in it.

"Aa....."

It didn't feel painful at all, but it felt like he was awakened.

Lisha's face didn't look angry, she also didn't look sad, and she also didn't look disdainful.

She was merely staring at Lux straightforwardly, with the face as a noble princess filled with self-confidence and pride.

"It looks like you have forgotten so I'll tell you this—, I'm weak you know?"

"—Eh?"

Lux felt perplexed getting told that with a tone that was full of confidence.

"As a Drag-Knight, those stronger than me are steadily becoming your comrades, new women are also approaching you one after another, I also cannot act skillfully as a princess—I'm so weak that my heart broke when my father abandoned me. I intend to endeavor so that I won't be like that but, honestly, I don't know whether what I'm doing right now is right or not. But see—not doing anything because of that is merely running away."

With that as the preface, Lisha looked straight at Lux.

The same like when they met the first time, she looked at him with crimson eyes that contained strong confidence.

"If you will stay by my side, then I can fight without running away. I don't mind even if you make mistake. Just by you fighting trying to help me, it has saved me like this. Don't get convinced by yourself that you cannot do anything just because you don't understand."

"....."

The hesitation dwelling inside Lux's chest was vanishing while he was listening to Lisha's words.

This wasn't the time for him to break in this kind of place.

There was still thing that he had to do.

Even if in the end his action couldn't save Celis, even if his action was mistaken, it was meaningless to hesitate in taking action just because of that.

"—Lisha-sama. Can you know the opponent's Drag-Ride from looking at this armor fragment?"

Lux put his hand inside his pocket and presented the clue about the attacker that he obtained.

It was the fragment of Drag-Ride worn by the suspicious man who attacked Coral in the middle of the campus festival.

Then, after Lisha who was also a Drag-Ride developer took the fragment, she immediately answered.

"This is....., it's a fragment from the shell part of the probing device installed on EX Drake's shoulder. When the part is shaved like this, it cannot get easily repaired, so it should be possible to specify the Drag-Ride this came from if you observed closely whether they have damaged part or not."

Gorynych that the Steel Witch—Rosa Granhide controlled along with its Drag-Ride clones, and then the EX Wurm her aide Calensia equipped.

Lux had secretly observed their Drag-Rides while fighting, but their Drag-Rides were spotless at the opening of the skill exhibition battle.

Thus this fragment couldn't be proof that the attack to them was because of Rosa, but there was still one other possibility remaining.

How did the attacker slip through the detection of the Drakes guarding around the Academy and became able attack Celis?

The attacker visited first as ordinary visitor and observed the movement of the guards.

And then if it was EX Drake that possessed camouflage function, 'that' could be done.

(Their objective is to harm the new kingdom with official procedure at the surface. Then—their next aim will be)

When he was thinking that, a conviction was born inside Lux.

"Celis-senpai, is in danger....."

But, in preparation for the worst case, he would play a hand just in case.

The problem was whether it would make it in time or not—.

When Lux was considering that, the door of the atelier opened and Tillfur rushed inside in panic.

"Lux-chi! Lisha-sama!? You are here!?"

Lisha was surprised seeing Tillfur running out of breath while replying back.

"Oo, you came at a nice timing. From now, the owner of the Drag-Ride where this fragment came from—"

Lisha was about to say that proudly, but Tillfur's yell drowned her words.

"Cross Field is in danger! About a hundred Abysses are suddenly gathering from the surrounding! Also no one can summon Drag-Ride other than us who are already wearing it right now!!"

"—!?"

Lux and Lisha's expressions changed hearing Tillfur's words.

Right after that—tremendous roaring sound and vibration could be heard from the center of the Academy.

Chapter 5 – Sacred Eclipse—Ark—

Part 1

She intended to train not just her body, but also her heart.

She conditioned herself for the sake of being able to maintain her calm constantly and took the best action no matter what the situation was.

But, when her teacher who taught her that transformed into monster, Celis looked up at that with terrified look and she trembled.

"What, is this.....this is——!?"

Inside the Academy's ground.

Right after the assaulting force of Dragon Marauder and the guard soldiers fought, the illusion of her teacher Wade that appeared once more transformed in appearance.

It was transforming into the figure of bizarre Abyss with something like flexible tentacle growing out from both his hands.

The tip that was protruding out for dozens of ml turned sharply pointed like a needle and instantly rushed toward Dragon Marauder's Earth Dragon division——, the users of Wyrms, piercing through the chests of several of them.

"Thi, THIS MONSTERRRR-!"

"——Di, DIEEeeEEeEEE-!"

The remaining several Drag-Knights of Dragon Marauder made use of Breath Gun and Cannon to pour concentrated firing on it.

The tentacle monster was shot and became like a beehive tragically, but right after that, the flesh was regenerated in the blink of eye and it counterattacked.

Doguu-! The tentacles that stretched out once more pierced the barrier of the Wrms and tore off the body.

Flowers of fresh blood bloomed one after another, shrieks were raised from the surrounding.

"-.....!?"

Airi raised a short scream and Celis covered her eyes with her arm.

While the Dragon Marauders were getting killed one after another, the guards who had worn their Drag-Ride before the hangar was sealed called out toward Celis.

"Leave this to us, please escape!"

"It should be safe inside the Academy, quickly——"

Even while they were trembling against the unprecedented threat, the soldiers told her that bravely.

Perhaps Lindwurm's tuning wasn't completed yet because she still couldn't summon it to here.

In that case the best thing to do was to protect Airi while retreating from this place and made preparation.

Reaching that conclusion, Celis started running toward the Academy.

"You are running away? You were staying quiet about how I died because of the words you told me until only recently weren't you? Did you think that you could escape while keeping it hidden?"

"——!?"

The impure voice tone that was like mud followed from behind Celis.

When she turned only her head slightly to look back——most of the military's Drag-Knights were already defeated.

"How.....!?"

Strange.

No matter how powerful of an Abyss the enemy was, for the Drag-Knights who were prepared for battle to be defeated this easily was just—.

Besides, she had seen somewhere the way of fighting of this enemy.

The regeneration power to instantly recover the flesh and the overwhelming destructive power using tentacles.

It was a strength that reminded her of the Ragnarok, Poseidon that they fought in the past.

At that time when she started running while pulling Airi's hand, the demon suddenly stood still.

When the perplexed Celis looked back, a sound could be heard.

"Horn flute's sound—. Don't tell me, this Abyss can even call other Abysses!?"

Her prediction was correct. Abysses who seemed to be hiding somewhere until now were appearing as though they were foaming out from darkness.

Their type was the Abyss that was called as sea demon, Kraken.

The horn flute sound was ringing continuously without stopping from the demon's body.

That sound was gradually getting louder as though an endless finale was being played.

It was as though it was trying to summon even the Ragnarok from other Ruins that were far away.

"Is this your weakness? My disciple Celis."

"A demon that take the form of human....., this is, don't tell me—"

Airi who witnessed that terrifying sight muttered with a trembling voice.

"It's not, a mere Abyss. It's a calamity of higher ranking that surpassed Nocturnal. This is what the Lords mentioned——"

The annihilation weapon that would lead the world to destruction——the human shaped Ragnarok, Sacred Eclipse.

Several more reinforcement came running at the same time when Airi was shuddering from realizing its true identity, and the hell was restarted once more.

—

Part 2

At that time, there were the figures of Dragon Marauder who intruded toward the back of the campus building inside the Academy's ground under the cover of the fighting.

"Oh, you guys are really late. Thanks to that I got tormented a lot you know?"

A young woman with both her hands shackled and chained was smiling inside the jail.

The one in that place inside the Academy's ground was one of Dragon Marauder's three bosses who was captured by Lux before this, the Human Dragon division commander Drakkhen. She was receiving questioning here.

Knowing that, the remaining two division commanders of Dragon Marauder came here to save her.

"We already recovered your Asp by making use of this chaos. Let's get out of her quickly, Drakkhen."

The one who told her that was a youth who was wearing top and bottom with short length.

The Earth Dragon division commander who was leading the force that basically consisted from Wurm, Vine.

His features still had innocence remaining in them that was typical for a young boy, but he was clad with the aura of a veteran soldier.

And then the senior who could be said to be in the prime of his life, the man with trait of big body build and darkish skin, Gatouhan.

He was the Heaven Dragon division commander who led a force that had Wyvern as its linchpin, and he was also the leader of Dragon Marauder in essence. Continuing after Vine he showed a bold smile.

"The Sacred Eclipse showed up here. It was a coincidence that even we didn't anticipate, but it was right after the Drag-Ride hangar was covered with Chaff Slime."

".....What did you say?"

Drakkhen who was showing composure until then reacted after hearing the words Sacred Eclipse. She showed a forbidding look.

"We planned to withdraw because it would be troublesome even just taking on the Drag-Knights who could move but—, if we make use of this chance, perhaps we can crush even the main force of Seven Dragon Paladins."

"....."

When Gatouhan boasted so, Drakkhen unusually showed a baffled expression.

"I'm joking. After that Sacred Eclipse appeared here, our life would also be in danger if we stay here. The subordinates we gathered in order to save you already got devoured. Losing even more force than this will negatively affect our plan in the future."

"Then that's fine. Even like this I'm reflecting of how I let my subordinates die last time. —And, what did our employer say?"

"We're told to accomplish the objective as it is. Obstructing those guys and conquering Ruin. If we can reach Avalon first, at that point we will be able to obtain this very world itself within our hand. Then day when we who are ostracized as ruffians take everything under heaven as ours won't be that far."

"It will be great if we aren't get outsmarted though. After all our opponents are like that."

Drakkhen who was released from her shackle smiled bitterly in respond to Gatouhan's self-assured tone.

"I know about the risk. The problem is the management of the method. Isn't that right?"

In respond to the question of the young division commander Vine, Drakkhen too nodded "You aren't wrong" honestly.

After that she was carried on the armored arm of the Divine Drag-Ride that Gatouhan piloted and they slipped vigilantly into the darkness, flying away to outside the ground.

"Don't get greedy, everyone of Seven Dragon Paladins. If your luck is bad, I won't even have the chance to counterattack at you guys."

It wasn't just a sarcasm, but words that came from Drakkhen's true feeling.

Leaving behind the muttering that was filled with slight expectation, they withdraw from the battle line.

—

Part 3

Celis who protected Airi from Sacred Eclipse and escaped was being watched by a man from hiding.

He was a hunter. Not a swindler or even bandit.

He told himself that in his heart and waited silently for a chance.

Thinking back, he had only ever walked through worthless life until now.

He was blessed with some talent as a Drag-Knight.

But, he didn't obtain the strength to go as far as becoming the best, and the royalty and nobility were also prejudiced against him.

Gerda received punishment and thrown into jail from the crime of knowing about his superior's corruption and yet staying quiet about it.

"—What an unreasonable story."

Everyone was calmly committing a crime behind the scene anyway.

It was only the more powerful people doing thing that was par for the course.

And yet why—he was faulted for staying quiet about it?

But, he was noticed and bloomed a second time from being prisoner into being a Drag-Knight.

While he was a criminal, he was a powerful person whose deed was recognized.

Gerda fixed the aim of his ^{Full Moon Dragon Scale} 《Circular Edge》, the rare armament that his EX Drake was installed with, then he smirked smugly once more.

"Aa—"

Melting pleasure was welling up inside his brain along with his sigh.

Before his eyes, that Celistia of the four great nobles was fighting.

In order to save her fellow students, she opposed the enemy without despairing even without wearing Drag-Ride.

The time Gerdaf felt pleasure was when he degraded such beautifully noble something into the ground.

In the end, the one who won was those who accomplished evil skillfully—.

He couldn't resist thrusting out such reality toward human who was walking the correct path.

This time he received the order to get rid of this girl by making it looked like she committed suicide.

This was a rare chance, so he would make her get eaten by that strange Abyss, then he would dissect her body until it was beyond recognition.

His hand pulled the trigger with such dark desire seething inside him.

The firing nozzles of the rare armament installed on both his Drag-Ride's shoulders instantly let out a faint light.

".....There-!"

The blades in the shape of ring that was tinged with purple light were fired consecutively in that place.

Celis didn't notice. The blades would definitely hit.

"—Howling Howl!"

Right after Gerdaf was convinced of that—his prediction was betrayed and the eight blades were deflected.

"What-!?"

The man's eyes opened wide from shock. Right after that, his sight caught the figure of a huge jet black Drag-Ride.

Lux who was clad in the violent dragon Bahamut stood in his way.

"So it's you who targeted Celis-senpai?"

".....What do you mean? I am just a guard soldier of new kingdom. In order to defeat that monster, I'm aiming for a chance to attack——"

Indeed, the man was clad in the army uniform of new kingdom.

But, Lux was calm to the end and pointed the tip of his sword at him.

"The armor fragment that was shaved from my previous fight with you matched with the damage on your EX Drake. If you want to proof your innocence then dispel your armor."

When Celis was attacked at that time too, the man stole the uniform of guard soldier and changed into it.

When he lured out Coral previously, he must be working other dirty tricks too while he was at it.

"....."

Gerdaf let out a small sigh at what Lux pointed out.

After a few seconds of silence, his attitude changed drastically.

"It's shocking. Did you tail that woman, predicting that I'll attack again?"

Lux didn't find Gerdaf by coincidence.

He requested Noct of the Triad to watch out Celis's surrounding from afar.

There was the possibility that after causing Celis to fall into a trap, the enemy would come again to strike her while both her heart and body were weakened.

"I can predict the rough idea of something like thinking of a person committing evil in the shadow."

".....Hoo. But this is a bit unexpected. The new kingdom fell into a predicament because of that woman's fault. To worry that much for the safety of such loser——"

"Is something that you cannot even imagine? You who have never fought even once for the sake of someone else?"

Lux's gaze was cool-headed, like when he attempted to carry out revolution in the old empire at the past.

Gerda who was stared by those eyes bit his lips and confronted Lux.

"Hmph, the criminal of old empire putting on air like a saint. Fine, then I'll teach you a lesson! This me who is lowly by nature, will soil your correct path and drive you into despair you cannot recover from!"

Dou- The EX Drake leaped backward and fired Circular Edge once more.

All directions—the wheel blades each drew different trajectories from eight directions and assaulted Lux simultaneously.

A single swing of sword deflected several of the blades, but the remaining curved blades grazed Bahamut's armor.

Six Punishers

"I'm one of the 'Servants', Heiburg's assassination corps, the 'Hunting Punishment' Gerda Veil. I'll tear you limb from limb and disgrace the pride of that duke daughter!"

He took distance. At the same time the curved blades were coming back as though they were getting drawn in.

Lux skated his Bahamut in the air before the armament was fired once more and the battle began.

Part 4

At the center of Academy's ground.

The main body of Sacred Eclipse that emitted a tune that was like the tone of horn flute and summoned a lot of Abysses.

Witnessing that, several male Drag-Knights who guarded the Academy concentrated their full strength attack.

Light bullets gouged flesh and slashes sent limbs flying.

With that the human shaped Ragnarok who took Wade's appearance—Sacred Eclipse got its four limbs plucked off and turned into countless lump of meat that was unrecognizable from its original form.

—But, each of those fragments that was scattered all over immediately began to simultaneously regenerate by themselves.

Celis who saw that got a hunch of what was going on.

"Please run! I'll stay here to—!?"

She started speaking to Airi, but then she noticed the fact that it was impossible.

She couldn't use her Divine Drag-Ride Lindwurm.

That moment when Celis faltered in her speaking, the revived countless Wade grew tentacles from their hands and feet and pierced the armor of the soldiers.

"UGYAAAaaH!"

Celis was desperately forming a plan while listening to the scream of the remaining soldiers.

At that time she suddenly heard a voice from behind.

"Celis-senpai, I have message from Lisha-sama. 'I hurriedly finished the repair and maintenance. If it's now Lindwurm can be summoned——' she said."

Before the fourth hangar was sealed, Lisha took out Lindwurm to her atelier.

Thus, as long as the repair was finished, the Drag-Ride could be summoned.

"Noct!? Why are you.....?"

The one who was approaching from behind under camouflage function was Noct in her Drake.

"Please save the talk for later. Right now let's exterminate the enemy."

Noct intercepted the Krakens with her Breath Gun while replying calmly.

The same like Bahamut and Lindwurm that were taken out for post-battle repair and maintenance, the three Triads were able to move because they took out their Drag-Rides from the hangar in order to patrol.

Due to Lux's request, Noct was hiding and staying on guard as Celis's guard from a little while ago. Sharis and Tillfur right now were moving under Lisha's command.

"I will lead Airi until a safe place. Can I ask senpai to buy time until then?"

"——Yes. I will personally deal with this enemy myself."

Celis drew out her sword while muttering that at the same time. She glared at the pursuing Sacred Eclipse.

She instantly equipped Lindwurm's armor and skated forward with high speed acceleration.

The lightning attack she unleashed immediately burned one of the clones to ash.

But, the remaining dozens of Sacred Eclipse talked while still wearing Wade's appearance.

"Kukuku....., you are reckless like usual. You said that even you has found someone you can rely on, but it seems that even those words are just you bluffing."

It whispered as though it had seen through Celis's wavering, but she had no time to feel shaken.

"After all your existence is just to that degree. You cannot fight more than this. —Rest in peace!"

Sacred Eclipse that had split until dozens of bodies scattered a dreadful number of tentacles to the surrounding.

But, Celis used Lindwurm's Divine Raiment, Divine Gate to dodge. Then she stabbed her huge lance from behind one body.

"Even if that's actually the case, I will fulfill my duty. Just like the real you who admonish the old empire with resolve for the sake of the people!"

Even if she was only bluffing she had her trained self. She could fight.

No—, she could fight because she believed.

Celis finished off the dozens of Solar Eclipse's clones one by one while burning with fighting spirit.

Then, a transmission came from the Drake of Noct who was retreating with Airi.

'Can you hear Celis-senpai? I have evacuated Airi. Sharis and Tillfur also want to go there as reinforcement as soon as the situation change but—. Before that, I'll realize Lux-san's wish. I will go to where he is and transmit his voice as it is to you through the communication.'

Currently Celis had no leeway to respond.

That was why she followed what Noct said and received the voice through Dragon Voice as it was.

'Please listen Celis-senpai. The words of him who is fighting to wipe out your dishonor——'

—

Part 5

One of the Servants, a corps of Heiburg, Gerdaf revealed his true color and pressed hard on Lux.

The enemy's scheme to stain Celis's dignity and drove it onto the ground, and then killing her by making it to look like suicide.

In order to stop that evil scheme, Lux drove Bahamut flew inside Academy's ground.

The Drag-Ride Gerdaf wore was the special equipment type EX Drake.

The four legged Drag-Ride freely used jump. It would then change trajectory midair and avoided pursuing attack.

Originally Bahamut's mobility should be superior, but due to that superb escaping technique, Lux found it difficult to catch him.

"How long you're planning to chase me huh, hero-sama! A lot of Abysses are appearing at the other side right now. Are you feeling like to let those spoiled girls of the Academy died to defeat me!?"

Gerdaf cackled loudly while taking distance. At the same time he was using Circular Edge to obstruct Lux.

With the end of the campus festival, the inside of the Academy was dark with few watch fire. Lux too couldn't display his maximum speed.

On the other hand, the enemy used his radar to detect the obstacles like the booth and stage that hadn't been cleared away and grasped the terrain. He was nimbly weaving through the gaps.

The Drag-Rides of Lisha and others of Syvalles and the Seven Dragon Paladins were sealed because of Chaff Slime's thin membrane covering the hangar. The majority of them couldn't move and were ordered to stand by.

It seemed that it was only the vice captain Singlen who didn't trust the new kingdom and moved the storage location of his Divine Drag-Ride, but it appeared that he was heading outside the Academy in order to defeat the Abysses that were gathering from outside.

His aim was the protection of the important people from various countries who were staying in the government office building at the first block, in order to raise his own achievement.

Singlen who was attempting to stand at the top as Drag-Knight was trying to build up achievements while raising his World Rank and obtain support from the influential people of various countries.

In order to stop Singlen who was envisioning the establishment of a ruling class by Drag-Knight, perhaps Lux ought to head over there too.

But,

"I won't be misled anymore. Even if everyone else won't recognize me, I'll still fight for the sake of everyone who believe in me!"

The phantom of Fugil that coiled around him.

Lux accelerated Bahamut as though to shake it off.

'Chih' Gerdaf clicked his tongue and changed his trajectory. He changed route toward the courtyard where there were several Abysses at there.

He wasn't cutting off his own path of escape.

When Lux and the Abysses were connected in a straight line, he erased his figure using EX Drake's camouflage.

"He aim to make me clash with the Abyss—, no"

Lux immediately cut down the two Kraken approaching him from the front.

But, Gerdaf scattered Circular Edge aiming at the slight opening that was created the moment Lux attacked.

The circle shaped blades that were tinged with purple light rotated.

They were fired toward Lux and approached from many directions once more.

"Kuh.....!"

Lux was lacking in defense method. Even when he tried to guard using his large sword, he could only deflect around half each time.

The joint of his armored arm was targeted. Strong impact also ran through Lux's body.

The rotating blades clung to the armor for a fixed interval, weakening him with certainty.

"Aa——this is the best. This sensation of making sport of someone powerful who is far more skilled than me, this is why I cannot stop doing this job."

Slurp The sound of licking lips and laughing voice could be heard from the darkness.

But, Lux ignored even the pain in his whole body and flew once more to catch Gerdaf's figure.

Lux finally entered the sword range, but Gerdaf fired his Circular Edge once more. The blades didn't aim at Lux but scattered to left and right.

".....-!?"

Lux was taken by surprise for a moment, but he immediately noticed the enemy's aim.

Lux who almost caught up with the enemy changed direction and quickly flew at the direction where the round blades were fired.

There were the figures of two girls running to evacuate there.

"Kyaaah!"

"Howling Howl!"

Lux immediately fired the vortex of shockwave and shifted the orbit of the round blades.

But, the students received the after wave from the impact the round blades emitted and they were sent flying for several ml from that spot.

Lux immediately took stance in front of the girls and became shield to cover them.

But, Gerdaf who predicted that took distance from Lux once more and leaped toward the direction of girl dormitory.

"HIYAHAAAAHA! How cool. That's how the prince of justice got to act yeah!"

Gerdaf's mocking laugh echoed inside the darkness.

'Calm down'—Lux told himself.

Gerdaf's blunt provocation was an opening move.

Till the end it was a tactic to agitate Lux and exhausted him.

He had to assist Celis who was battling Divine Eclipse, but he couldn't leave behind this Gerdaf to go and help her.

But, that rare armament Circular Edge was troublesome.

The current Lux didn't happen to have the technique to slip through that simultaneous attack that was hiding an atrocious performance within.

The only technique that could possibly do that—was incomplete.

"Hah, don't try to keep up your outer appearance. That duke daughter of four great nobles is also the same. I hit her many times at inconspicuous spots, several spots like her arms and legs were even bruised, and yet! She tried to hide her own failure and didn't told anyone!"

'Let's go, Lux. I can fight.'

"_____"

But at that moment. Lux recalled the words that Celis muttered calmly and his emotion shook intensely.

Lux didn't notice at all when they were fighting together at the skill exhibition battle.

Celis bluffed saying she was all right because she didn't want to hold Lux back.

But, it wasn't because she didn't trust Lux or even because she didn't want to expose her own failure.

"What does someone like you understand about her resolve-!"

Along with his rage, Lux pushed his body forward and flew while making his large sword to roar.

"Nuuh!?"

The slash that was unleashed from that intense acceleration caused Gerdaf to back away in terror.

He took the tactic to make Lux clash with the Abysses that were called here by Sacred Eclipse, but Lux's movement surpassed expectation.

Multiple Krakens reacted to Lux and manipulated their tentacles to assault Lux.

Lux deflected the attack using Howling Howl, and when a gap was created he forcefully pushed on and cut apart the enemy standing in his way.

By fighting the same Abysses consecutively, Lux grasped their trait, predicted their movement in less than ten-odd seconds, and made it possible to attack using Reload on Fire.

"Celis-senpai was fighting like usual even with her injury. She fought so naturally that no one even noticed, not me, not everyone else. And then, even after the fight ended in a draw and failure, she didn't make any excuse!"

That wasn't because she was fixated with her pride as someone from the four great nobles or even because she feared getting reprimanded.

The two days period of the campus festival.

For some reason, Celis was hiding all that time while trying to support Lux.

It wasn't because she didn't want to face him or because she had done something to feel guilty about.

"It was so that I won't get unnecessarily worried. Everything was her fighting for my sake."

He wasn't under the wrong impression or anything, Lux didn't try to understand Celis's feeling.

His life at the imperial court in the era of the old empire.

He was looked down as a 'man' who was positioned the farthest from the imperial throne succession right. There was no one who properly evaluated him then.

Even after he became hated by the common people and abandoned, where he lost his mother in an accident, it was still like that all along.

Since the time he parted from his childhood friend Philuffy and betrayed by his eldest brother Fugil who he thought as heartening in his heart, Lux's heart was broken somewhere.

At the innermost depths of his heart, he was keeping away other people from himself except of those who had been close to him from the beginning like Airi or Philuffy.

The legendary Drag-Knight the Black Hero—or perhaps, the ruined prince of the old empire.

Or else perhaps, as the grandson of Wade who was Celis's teacher.

There were people who were genuinely feeling worried and concerned for Lux himself, without caring about those backgrounds of his. But Lux was unconsciously walling himself toward those feelings.

That was why Lux didn't understand Celis's feeling.

"I am—a big idiot. I haven't changed at all since that time I failed at the revolution. It was just as Nii-san said. I didn't understand anything, nothing at all."

"Hah.....! Just what the hell you are moaning! Do you finally got a screw loose in your head?"

Gerdaf kept up his guard toward Lux who was hot on his heels and approached him in high speed while taking even more distance.

He had already made Lux fought in Bahamut enough already, Lux should be exhausted right now.

If he didn't finish off his opponent soon, he would be blamed for his failure and got killed by his master.

Thus, Gerdaf was going to deal the finishing blow. It was at that timing it occurred.

—*PAAN!*

That instant when Gerdaf glared, a streak of flash was fired suddenly from the sky above—the sniping from a rifle shot through the shoulder of EX Drake he was wearing.

"—WHAAT-!?"

The shot that was fired from unexpected direction caused Gerdaf to look up to sky with horrified look.

It wasn't the work of the student Drag-Knight who arrived nearby Lux.

What was floating in the shadow of dark cloud that covered the moon was an unknown Drag-Knight under the cover of darkness.

Gerda reflexively let out electromagnetic wave from his EX Drake and investigated the unidentified Drag-Ride.

Unit name verdict – Divine Drag Ride 《Zahhak》 .

Pilot—Analysis uncertain.

(Who, is that.....!? This guy, is it a Dragon Marauder newcomer!?
No—wrong!?)

The moment of agitation caused a lapse in attentiveness.

Lux didn't let go of that slight opening.

"—Reload on Fire"

Using compression of time, the Drag-Ride's speed was accelerated by several times over. Consecutive slashes were unleashed in super high speed from that.

His barrier was cut up without even any time for defense, countless slash lines were carved on his body.

He immediately fired Circular Edge to protect EX Drake's armor, but Lux evaded them and ran his slashes on his flesh arms and legs.

"GU, GAAaAAAH!?"

The after wave from the impact that pierced the armor caused Gerda to raise an anguished shriek.

He was still alive, but his four limbs already couldn't move. He rolled on the grass.

"Nugu, uUUuUUU.....! This is, this is impossible!?"

Lux pointed his great sword at Gerdaf who was groaning in pain before he turned his gaze toward the sky.

It seemed that Noct tried to back him up using her Drake, but the attack just now wasn't her work.

It might be his other comrades—Lux thought, but no one came to mind.

Above all else, the Drag-Ride that performed the cover fire has vanished completely from that place without any trace behind.

"....."

After a moment, Lux stopped thinking.

He looked down on Gerdaf who was prostrating on the ground and then he slowly changed the direction of his gaze.

At slight distance away, Sacred Eclipse—the human shaped Ragnarok of the beginning and the end, and then Celis who was clad in Lindwurm were fighting.

"Celis-senpai....."

'Yes. I was unable to assist her but, I told Celis-senpai properly. Lux-san's feeling, toward Celis-senpai—'

Unnoticed Lux had arrived at the location of the Sacred Eclipse, the last place where Gerdaf was leading Lux toward in order to crush him.

Over there were the figures of the last remaining clones of Sacred Eclipse and Celis who were acting a mortal combat against each other.

—

It reached Celis's ear through the Dragon Voice.

The defect of Lux who was unable to accept someone's good will honestly.

That was why, Lux was unable to understand Celis's worry that was derived from her fondness toward Lux which Celis herself didn't understand.

That confession was conveyed to Celis through Noct's Drake and now she knew Lux's feeling.

"I'm sorry Lux. I avoided you all this time——"

Celis smiled powerlessly, then she also confessed her own mistake.

"I am really weak. No, while I said that I trust you, I couldn't have the courage to entrust even my weakness too to someone else....."

She was the daughter of a great feudal lord who had existed since the old empire era.

Her true nature was exactly because of her position as the daughter of a duke who was one of the four great nobles.

At the old empire at that time which had the tendency of male chauvinism, woman was treated as unnecessary.

Celis's mother could only give birth to female successor.

In order to protect her mother from the cold gaze their relatives turned toward her, Celis imposed to herself the duty to become an existence that was stronger than anyone, who wouldn't shame the name of noble.

"Thanks to Lux, I was able to convey my true feeling to everyone in the Academy. I could accept taking off my mask of persisting in my aloofness and refusing male. But——"

Celis fixed her posture with a somewhat lonely smile.

"But, I was unable to go as far as exposing my weakness. As the eldest daughter of one of the four great nobles, I who said that the position as a noble is irrelevant was adhering to it without noticing. That was why, I caused trouble to you all."

It was also the same with how she became unable to look at Lux's face around the time of the campus festival.

Also with how she was unable to report about the wound on her own body before the skill exhibition battle.

"Even so, Celis-senpai, you——protected me."

Lux quietly objected at Celis's words that she muttered self-depreciatingly.

She became embarrassed to look at Lux face to face, she couldn't show herself to him, she was hesitating.

Even so she continued to fight without running away or keeping him away at distance.

"You were hurt for the sake of me who was unable to notice everyone's feeling."

The imperial family and the people of the old empire era who abandoned and betrayed Lux.

And then Celis, who tried to protect and watch over Lux from the shadow even while resolving herself to stop being an aide of Seven Dragon Paladins.

He thought that she was really clumsy, and serious.

And then, he also thought of her as a proud and strong person.

She didn't think about how she wouldn't be able to do something, she chose an even harder path by her own initiative—but, she was fighting without losing against loneliness.

It was exactly because Celis held such feeling that Lux himself could realize his own defect.

"Thank you very much Celis-senpai. Thanks to you——I can still fight."

"Is that so.....then, I cannot lose, I too——"

Celis muttered that and took her stance once more.

At the same time, the cannon muzzle installed on her shoulder fired a compressed light bullet.

The wide range destructive blast special armament, Starlight Zero.

The small light bullet that was slowly floating in the air burst open *kaat-* along with a flash.

A space with a diameter of a few dozen ml was scattered away along with an impact that shook the ground.

"GU, OooOOO-.....!"

The number of the propagating Sacred Eclipses was decreased by quite a lot, but parts of Sacred Eclipse that was scattered to right nearby gathered in high speed and began to recover.

The immortal Ragnarok that repeated regeneration from splitting itself.

Even if it was attacked with unlimited attack with Lux's hidden technique, End Action, it would regenerate midway from a part of its body that was cut off and resurrected completely.

But, if it was fired with Starlight Zero with maximum strength that was exploded in even wider range, this time the damage would reach even the students who were evacuating inside the building.

Then, there was only one method that could be taken.

It was by examining the trait of the fighting strength they were wearing, the armaments and Divine Raiment of their Drag-Ride and comprehending their own strength.

Celis immediately derived the plan to deal with the enemy using the thinking of maneuver tactic that she polished together with her physique.

"—Break Purge – On"

She grasped her Sword Device and lightly sent her thought into it to activate the basic technique that she once learned.

She purged part of the armor she wore and left behind only a part of it.

She left her special armaments, the cannon muzzle of Starlight Zero, and the defensive armor that deployed the barrier.

Furthermore she even purged a part of her back wings that were the vital point of her mobility, transforming her Drag-Ride to a form that was specialized for attack.

The removal of armor using Break Purge was essentially a basic technique to decrease the burden to oneself, but if it was carried to the extreme it could be transformed into a hidden technique.

Depending on the situation, the unnecessary armor part could be cut off except the part for accomplishing the objective.

In this mode where the Drag-Ride's output was wrung out and focused to one point, it was a double-edged sword that could corner oneself into extreme danger if the user didn't accurately grasp their own strength and the enemy's strength.

But, this technique could be handled if it was by the current Celis.

She believed that with the addition of Lux's strength, this method was the best to defeat the enemy.

"Noct. There is something I want you to transmit while you continue keeping yourself camouflaged like that."

'Yes. What is it? I will give assistance as much as I can.'

To Noct who said that, Celis told her that she wanted her to clear out the people from the surrounding area.

At that moment, the presence hiding inside the bush moved with a leap.

"Omen of annihilation and lamentation confirmed. Granting thou salvation."

"——!?"

In a moment, Lux and Celis opened their eyes wide at the sight that they didn't expect.

Sacred Eclipse that revived and recovered its human shape in the form of a girl stabbed its fingertip into the dying Gerdaf.

The body of Gerdaf whose whole body was already carved into a state that was impossible to recover from——.

Black pattern spread out from the spot that was stabbed, his four limbs was healing from their wound in the blink of eye.

Both his eyeballs were tinged with the redness of fresh blood, his upper body was dyed with the blackness of marble pattern.

"Ruin's secret medicine.....the true identity of Elixir, don't tell me——"

"Was it the liquid that Sacred Eclipse has!?"

The moment Lux and Celis returned to their senses, Sacred Eclipse leaped back and took distance from them.

At the same time Gerdaf who achieved recovery from the devil transformation raised a howl like a beast.

"Hihihih.....HyaHAHAHAHAA!"

Gerdaf who became nonhuman distorted his lips in an arc shape and laughed monstrosly.

"This is lucky, if Sacred Eclipse crush you all for me, then I can fulfill the mission from my master. With this the new kingdom can also be shredded into pieces. Aa, I can see it, the despair of those left behind when you two dieeed"

The devil transformation by Elixir invaded human's mind and amplified their malice.

In other words, this must be the true essence of the man called Gerdaf.

Due to his hard life where he was toyed by misfortune, he came to curse people's happiness and existed with the creed of making other fall.

The evildoer Drag-Knight who supported the master of Heiburg who held immorality as righteousness.

"I won't allow anyone becoming happy from doing the right thing. This me won't recognize such thing, Black Hero. You show off hypocrite, be betrayed by your own benevolence and get exposed at human's malice, then despair—and die!"

The pair of eyes that were crimson like fresh blood snapped open, then Gerdaf started to move.

When the moonlight shined down from the gap between clouds that covered the moon, the incarnation of malice drove his EX Drake and leaped with terrific momentum.

—

Part 6

"Captain Magialca! It's an emergency situation! The many Abysses that appeared around Cross Field—they have marched until this neighborhood!"

At the first block a bit distance away from the Academy, inside the government office building where the government officials were staying, the second floor.

The captain of Seven Dragon Paladins who was staying there, Magialca was still wearing her housedress.

Or rather, it was mostly just underwear—she was sitting cross-legged in such appearance calmly.

"I have heard. But, with the hangar sealed even us cannot take any action, so there is nothing to do but staying at standby. I have given instruction to the lot who are equipping their Drag-Ride by coincidence. At the Academy, the trio called the Triad are at work in removing the Chaff Slime. And then—"

Saying that, Magialca stared outside the window with a clear gaze.

Over there was the Blue Tyrant, Singlen Shelbrit who was intercepting the Abysses that were already moving toward the Academy's gate.

His figure could be seen at the distant even from this building's window.

"Bu, but it's a herd that large. Sir Singlen alone is—"

"Leave him alone, that guy right now is fighting for the sake of 'achievements' that he loves. When he is like that we don't need to worry. After all, if it's only in the aspect of pure strength as Drag-Knight, that sleazebag is more outstanding than anyone."

Magialca was muttering while glaring once more at outside the window.

Ahead of her sharp gaze was Singlen wearing a huge blue Drag-Ride.

"Divine Drag-Ride Leviathan. Its ability is an extremely simple water control, but it's extremely difficult to find any weakness even after knowing the true shape of its ability."

The messenger soldier gulped after hearing Magialca's words. He then also looked at outside the window.

Right after that, several Abysses from the swarm that was attacking Singlen were carved apart by spouting up blades of water torrent and they were instantly turned into countless chunk of flesh.

—

Ahead of the gaze of Magialca, Singlen who was wearing Divine Drag-Ride Leviathan was slashing apart the Abysses that were coming at him one after another.

He created countless water blades from the ground and destroyed the enemy's core in one attack.

He also defended against counterattack using water shield and displayed an overwhelming battle.

"How extremely boring. Against this Sacred Eclipse of beginning, it's still not worth it for me to get serious it seems. By the way you—who permit you to peek at my technique?"

"—!?"

Singlen who was facing the swarm of Abyss in front of him suddenly turned around and glared at a spot above the sky that existed between clouds.

At the same time, a water bullet was fired from Leviathan's surrounding with a speed that eye couldn't follow.

DOUNN! It was just a simple water lump, but it made a thunderous sound like an explosion and caused drizzle to rain down.

The Drag-Knight targeted by that bullet barely defended against it before immediately turning around and retreated.

"That's not one of the Seven Dragon Paladins. The Lord fellows huh? Was that an attendant who acted by the imperial princess's order? No, or perhaps—well, doesn't matter. Your scheme won't work on me."

Singlen who smiled suggestively gripped his Sword Device silently.

He faced the closing in large swarm once more and resumed fighting.

—

Part 7

"I'll keep you company Celis. You who seek my salvation."

Sacred Eclipse that was standing before Celis's eyes transformed into an enormous tentacle monster that looked like Poseidon—the form of Ragnarok, while talking with Wade's voice.

She couldn't defeat it by herself—right now, Sacred Eclipse transformed once more into an opponent that was her weak point, the wall that once defeated her.

Furthermore this Ragnarok possessed both regenerative power and offensive power that were superior than the Poseidon that Lux once defated.

The tentacles attack with clawed tips that were like steel.

They possessed power that could easily pierced Drag-Ride's barrier, furthermore if she was forced into defense she would be killed.

She flew in the air and ran around to that the tentacles couldn't lock on her—but, this time the enemy predicted her trajectory and readied its attack ahead of her direction.

The blue tentacles pierced empty air like bullet and burst out shockwave.

Those impacts pierced the surrounding trees, smashing the water tank that was above girl dormitory and scattered water around.

"—Divine Gate."

Thus, Celis dodged using the Divine Raiment of instant movement.

She reset the disadvantageous situation where her escape path was blocked.

"Buying time until your comrades come as reinforcement huh? That's naive—my disciple."

".....-!?"

The giant sea monster muttered and sneered with Wade's voice.

Celis faced a hard fight because she had purged a part of her armor and shaved off her defensive power.

But, if it was with the stamina that Celis had trained for many years, she could still endure using her technique and Divine Raiment.

"—How many times you are planning to repeat the same mistake. You try to save someone and challenge a battle that is out of your league, and in the end you get hurt. Sooner or later that body of yours will surely perish. See?"

Sacred Eclipse—the Ragnarok that was creating Wade's voice suddenly stretched its tentacles toward a bush between the trees.

What the tentacles caught and pulled out from there one a female student of the Academy.

"NOOOO, HELP MEE-!?"

Celis reacted to the girl's scream and her body reflexively moved.

Almost at the same time, Noct who was hiding herself with camouflage yelled through the Dragon Voice.

'Please wait Celis! That girl is a fake!'

"——"

If it could transform its outside appearance to mimic human, then it was also possible to partially disguise the tip of its tentacle.

Celis noticed Sacred Eclipse's trap, but countless tentacles grew out from the ground in that opening where her judgment lapsed for a moment.

The attack of sharp tips pierced the thin barrier and grazed Celis's side.

—

Part 8

"Celis-senpai-!?"

At the open space within the Academy's ground slight distance away, Lux saw Celis receiving Sacred Eclipse's counterattack and he yelled.

Taking advantage of that opening, Gerdaf who was clad in EX Drake violently assaulted Lux.

He leaped and fired Circular Edge at the same time.

After that a beat later, he was falling while slashing down his Blade from overhead.

It was a flowing chain of attacks that was making use of the rare armaments strong point.

As expected Lux couldn't dodge all the projectiles that were flying from many directions simultaneously. Bahamut was sent flying backward from the impact.

(That special armament—, it can even homing and luring the opponent!)

Lux should have evaded the round blades that were in the trajectory that his sword couldn't block, even so several of the blades still hit him directly.

There was no way he could fly and escaped to the sky.

If Lux didn't lure Gerdaf who went through devil transformation, he would surely change his target to Celis who was fighting Sacred Eclipse—or to the female dormitory that wasn't so far from here.

His opponent Gerdaf also understood that. From some time ago he was attacking based on that understanding.

And then, Gerdaf became unconcerned with the burden to his body due to the effect of the devil transformation. He was making acrobatic movement

that originally he couldn't do due to the burden on his body; He was leaping using wall and trees as foothold while firing multiple layers of attack at Lux.

(I cannot keep this up for long. At this rate——)

The enemy's combat strength surpassed the imagination.

Gerdaf erased his presence within the night's darkness. Lux was completely unable to see through Gerdaf's attack preliminary movement.

But, he was already starting to grasp the timing when Gerdaf's attack started.

If he calmly predicted it, Lux could settle this with a counter at the next chance.

When Lux was focusing intently to look for that chance, the mocking voice of Gerdaf who was slipping into the darkness could be heard.

".....I really cannot stomach it, that ugly mug that is believing in the future. Even though I have set up the stage to make that duke daughter-sama fall in disgrace after much trouble"

"What, do you mean?"

Lux silently took his stance.

He deliberately responded to the conversation in order to grasp Gerdaf's location accurately from the direction of his voice.

"Kukuku, I pretended to be an ordinary visitor who watched the fight by accident and secretly spread a rumor. Because that woman got too impatient to raise achievement, the new kingdom fell into a predicament now. Even if you guys actually overcome this battle, that woman will still meet wretched experience. After all humans who don't have anything are sensitive to the weakness of the strong yeah."

Gerdaf's provoked to enrage Lux and threw his control out of order.

Even so Lux kept glaring forward with a cold gaze without a single change in his expression.

"—Even then, it doesn't change what I should do. I'm not scared anymore of getting avoided by her!"

"Hah!? Of course you are! As expected from the cold hearted prince yeah! You don't care a whit about your comrade or anything aren't ya! Then, try to dodge this too-!"

Gerda let out a laughter of contempt and his presence moved at the same time.

At the same time, the rare armaments burst out once more from the bushes at the darkness some distance away.

Circular Edge—the eight blades that were fired toward Lux in arching trajectory were sent out with even more atrocious speed that surpassed the previous times.

At the same time Gerda skated as though to chase those blades and approached Lux in a straight line with his Blade readied.

His true aim wasn't Lux's agitation, it was to make Lux stopped moving from the talk.

From within the eight blades, the enemy would surely directed two of them to the direction of the girl dormitory.

He fired the blades one after another with the anticipation that Lux would deflect those two blades.

At the timing when Lux somehow deflected the round blades, Gerda would aim at that opening with his Blade attack.

After a short pause, calculating the time of just around a second after firing the pursuing attack, Gerda leaped.

The shockwave of Howling Howl couldn't blow away Circular Edge that was guided with rotation.

Thus, Gerdaf was convinced that he had surpassed Lux's foresight and obtained victory at hand.

"Die hero! Die while gritting your teeth in frustration of yourself who cannot protect anything!"

But at that moment, the scenery of the surrounding that was centered on Lux distorted.

From that space that was created like a spreading sphere, the colors other than black and white were fading.

"After receiving my teaching, you has mastered Drag-Ride within unprecedented short time. It's not just because of your innate talent. Your wish of wanting to protect someone important to you. That's exactly what draw out your strength and guide you to that power. In other words——"

Five years ago. The advice that Fugil told him was replayed at the back of Lux's mind.

'If there is something that you think as important from the bottom of your heart at your side, your strength will surpass the limit in respond to that——making you strong.'

"——HAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAH!"

And then, Lux raised a howl like a dragon.

It was the gesture for the sake of removing his body restriction and liberated his strength.

The advice that was bequeathed to him from Fugil at the past was given to him once more from Celis, releasing his shackle.

That was a power that he definitely learned once, but was lost with Fugil's betrayal.

Reload on Fire—time was decelerated due to the Divine Raiment of compression and strengthening.

The time of Bahamut's surrounding was compressed and rapidly decelerated until a fragment of the original speed. The eight round blades stopped in place, as though they were stopped along with time.

"Wha—!?"

Gerda's pair of eyes that were dyed crimson due to the devil transformation snapped open from shock.

The activation of Divine Raiment in wide range and with high power output.

Gerda had obtained information that he used to form his prediction about the compression strengthening.

But this power output far surpassed his prediction. It even made him hallucinate as though space itself was standing still for a moment.

"WHAT THE HEeLL-.....!?"

Immediately after, the round blades that were fired toward the girl dormitory at the back were deflected by the great sword that Lux swung in similarly decelerated speed, all of them got their direction shifted.

—But, that should be impossible.

It might be probable if Lux went through devil transformation like himself, but he had confirmed that Lux had no strength to realize Bahamut's high power output while still handling the Drag-Ride with more than average skill, and yet.

"Kuh....., even so! It will work if it's with this attack!"

He had gone through devil transformation, and he controlled his Drag-Ride while ignoring the burden to the body that normal human wouldn't be able to endure—the EX Drake was dashing in super speed.

But, at that timing when Gerdaf was going to unleash the attack with all his might, something shot through his chest easily.

"—Wha, guah!?"

The time when Reload on Fire was activated just now.

Lux conversely threw a dagger aiming at Gerdaf.

That blade was thrown while Lux's surrounding—the time was still super decelerated. Its speed was then super accelerated until more than ten times and attacked Gerdaf.

Gerdaf's balance crumbled, but he himself couldn't oppose the inertia and kept charging toward Lux.

The one who got trapped was himself.

Gerdaf shuddered in terror after knowing that fact, and right after that, the Quick Shot of Lux who was waiting for him splendidly ran Gerdaf through.

"—U, GUAAaAaAAAAH!?"

The EX Drake's multi-layered armor was smashed apart. The upper body that went through devil transformation was cleaved. Fresh blood spurted out.

It was settled instantly.

Lux's breathing quickened after he was released from the extreme state.

"-.....!? Not yet—"

The enemy in front of him was defeated, but it wasn't over yet.

The mankind's enemy. The mechanism to annihilate the world—Sacred Eclipse.

He had to move once more for Celis's sake.

If it was now, he understood the thought of Celis who trusted and hung her hope on him.

That was why Lux endured the fatigue that even now could make him faint and looked at her who was fighting on the ground right nearby.

—

Part 9

"The way you attack, it's so that my clones—won't increase in number? And then why are you continuing to struggle pointlessly even after understanding that you are unable to finish me off?"

The human shaped Ragnarok that repeated inexhaustible regeneration and splitting—Sacred Eclipse.

That thing that took Wade's appearance once more smoothly stretched out tentacles from its body and attacked Celis without stopping.

"—Divine Gate"

Celis who removed a part of her armor using Break Purge was flying by squeezing out her few remaining stamina.

She freely used her Divine Raiment of instant movement to take the Solar Eclipses by surprise and defeated the clones one after another but—she couldn't completely defeat the enemy no matter what.

Splat splat, she only scattered the clones' body fluids on the stone paving.

Even the main body would split and regenerate. It was a formidable enemy that surpassed Poseidon. The current Celis didn't have the mean to defeat it.

"Why did you yourself remove Starlight Zero that can defeat me? Was it because you don't have the resolve to get your comrades mixed up in it? Making such judgment, it's also the role of noble who is standing above the people. —Isn't that right?"

"—!?"

Sacred Eclipse snapped its wicked eyes wide open, then it unleashed its tentacles like whip.

The attack struck Lindwurm's remaining armor and blew away Celis's body.

Because the armor and barrier became thin due to the Break Purge, the impact would be transmitted even just from a grazing attack, making her flesh and bone to creak.

Coupled with the blows she received before the skill exhibition battle, her movement was getting duller and duller.

Fatigue and injury were gradually robbing her movement.

Even so Celis was still emitting that aloof air from her body.

"Are you waiting for reinforcement, my disciple? Are you thinking that it's fine to become sacrifice if it's for the sake of your comrade—? How stout-hearted. Are you trying to walk the same path like me who became the cornerstone to stop that old empire?"

Sacred Eclipse was sneering boldly like that with a tone turned completely into that of her teacher Wade.

But, even while Celis was gasping for breath, she leaked out a faint smile.

"Thank you very much. For allowing me to meet with Wade-sensei one more time."

"_____"

Sacred Eclipse didn't give back any reply.

But, its expression was simply stiffening, as though it was bewildered by the words of gratitude.

"But, in the end you are a fake. It's like you are taking such shape in the attempt of learning about human. Both of our study is still insufficient isn't it."

With her lightened equipment, Celis moved up to the sky—escaping out of the tentacles range. Then she took a stance with her lance.

She moved higher than the girl dormitory rooftop, surpassing the height of the bell tower.

And then, she flew to right below like a streak of falling star.

"What are you saying my disciple? Calling me study insufficient. Even an attack that is accelerated from that position won't defeat me. It's pointless even if reinforcement arrive. From here one—I will achieve even further evolution."

"The techniques I'm using are mostly learned from sensei. But, you cannot defeat me. The reason is....."

Celis paused her words slightly and smiled.

"—because the one who taught me to believe in other, is the boy I love."

Celis took a stance with her lance, and accelerated toward the ground where the swarm of Sacred Eclipse was standing.

She poured all her energy into her lance and the propulsion device the back wings, transforming her very body itself into lightning arrow.

"—!?"

It was a lightning that vertically split apart the night sky.

The vortex of power clad in terrifying destruction and electric heat attacked toward the main body of Sacred Eclipse.

The enemy of human who possessed power that surpassed human knowledge—Abyss.

This Ragnarok stood at one of those summits. But its reaction, was surpassed by Drag-Knight's skill.

The tentacles that were launched to intercept were easily burned off, the core of Sacred Eclipse was pierced.

"You failed, my disciple! The real me is countless! No matter how you struggle, with your strength it's——"

At that moment, Sacred Eclipse noticed how the space between it and Celis was losing color.

The Divine Raiment that Lux's Bahamut possessed, Reload on Fire was exerting the compression strengthening on it.

".....What is, your aim?"

At that time when Sacred Eclipse murmured with a baffled expression, Celis in front of it roared.

"——HAAaaAAAAAAAH!"

She focused the Drag-Ride's strength using Break Purge and unleashed a lightning attack with maximum power output that surpassed the limit.

The girl in her solitude killed her weakness and continued to discipline and polish herself until now.

Lux moved in concert with her full strength that she obtained from untiring hard work.

Celis moved without any deciding any advance arrangement with Lux, but Lux pointed the tip of his Sword Device forward as though his movement was in resonance with her.

"——Reload on Fire!"

The lightning that was fired from the lance concentrated into one point was amplified by more than ten times due to Bahamut's Divine Raiment.

Thunderous sound reverberated and the atmosphere burst, flash was completely blanketing the surrounding.

".....But it's pointless-! By the time you defeat a single body of mine——"

By the time the body was reduced to the ash along with the core, Sacred Eclipse let go of its own consciousness and sent signal to the clones at its surrounding.

As long as its clones survived, it would turn them into its main body as replacement, it would be able to revive no matter how many times—was how it supposed to be, but, it was unable to do that.

"—!?"

The large amount of clone bodies at the surrounding were showered with lightning attack and burned black.

Celis repeatedly attacked the clones of Sacred Eclipse that possessed Poseidon's trait wasn't just for the sake of reducing their number.

So to speak, it was a diversion to make her original plan worked.



The clones were destroyed many times and their body fluid was scattered around in large amount.

The Lightning Flash in maximum output was transmitted through the liquid that was scattered at the surrounding in order to burn down the whole herd in one go.

The attack's might that was insufficient even with her spending all her strength was increased until more than ten times by Divine Raiment Reload on Fire.

She had learned tactics for every situation, and with that she implemented the best plan right on the spot.

Celis's thinking ability that had been thoroughly tempered—her Maneuver Tactic.

If it was Lux, he would surely predict her aim, and on top of that—he would surely use Reload on Fire for her. She was able to believe so.

And then, this cooperation was accomplished by him answering her expectation.

It was an attack that came from their bond, an attack that would be impossible if they weren't equal in strength and possessed equal knowledge in tactics.

"That's *splen, did*. Human"

Sacred Eclipse that was pierced by Celis's spear was carbonized and crumbled into pieces.

The threat of world destruction—, the source of the discordant sound that continued to summon Abysses left behind few words and dissolved into the air, vanishing completely.

"Haa, haa, haa....."

The backlash and fatigue from unleashing an attack of the greatest level caused Celis's body to stagger.

Her armor was dispelled and her body tottered. Lux clad in Bahamut softly caught her.

"—Thank you for your hard work, Celis-senpai."

The gentle and kind smile of the young man.

Seeing the presence of the man who was supporting herself, Celis felt relieved from her heart.

Her heart was throbbing hard even now, but she didn't avert her face anymore, she also didn't run away.

Therefore,

"I'm sorry Lux. I lied to you—"

She talked to speak her feeling, to properly say what she couldn't say until now.

"I said that I trust you, I told you that I want to rely on you, but I didn't have the necessary courage. I couldn't entrust to you, my weakness that I didn't want to recognize."

"....."

Celis confessed with a lonely look.

But, Lux didn't feel that the regret she harbored was a sin or anything.

Anyone needed courage to speak of their weakness.

It was all the more when it was an unknown feeling that bewildered them and they themselves couldn't understand.

Even so Celis didn't run away. She compromised and tried to protect Lux.

"The one who is weak—is me. I said that I want to know everyone's feeling, all this time I believed that I was fighting for that sake, but I didn't know anything. At the bottom of my heart, I'm scared to accept the feeling of other."

The day of coup d'état five years ago.

A wall was created in Lux's heart due to the betrayal of the elder brother who he trusted the most. Celis destroyed that wall.

But, there was something he understood clearly thanks to Celis.

At the very least, the advice that Fugil once gave him was correct.

That Fugil didn't plan to betray Lux and make him fall right from the very beginning.

"That's why, thank you very much Celis-senpai. For freeing my heart, for staying at my side——"

He conferred words filled with gratitude and deep affection to this girl who was important to him.

The cheeks of Celis who was still being held up reddened and she got flustered.

"Su, such thing.....I'm troubled that you are saying it to me face to face like this! N, no, I'm not troubled I permit it. Bu, but, right now it's embarrassing——"

She covered her face with her hands.

Even though usually she was a strong and dignified senior, but seeing her like this, Lux got a thought that might be disrespectful toward Celis.

He thought that Celis was terribly cute at this kind of time.

At that time when he was thinking of such thing, there was suddenly a sound from behind.

"—DI, EEEeEE-!"

Gerdaf who was crouching in a dying state drove his worn out EX Drake and brandished up his Blade from behind Lux and Celis.

But,

"That's meaningless. Your Drag-Ride cannot move anymore."

Lux calmly said that over his shoulder. At the same time, the armored arm of the EX Drake broke and fell.

Because the user Gerdaf went through devil transformation, the Drag-Ride itself wasn't dispelled, but it was already in a state where fighting or escaping were impossible.

Lux had learned from the fight with Dilwy, that to subdue a demonized person who possessed vitality and toughness that surpassed Abyss, destroying their Drag-Ride was effective.

If they interrogated Gerdaf after this and proofed that the incident this time was because of Heiburg's intrigue, the result of the skill exhibition battle could be overturned.

"Damn, you, bastards....."

The effect of Elixir was also gradually vanishing.

The jet black pattern that was dyeing Gerdaf's upper body was receding, his body was returning into flesh body that was soaked with blood and sweat.

When he was trying to struggle even with that wholly injured body, his complexion suddenly changed.

"—Hah! Acknowledged! As expected from my master!"

The expression that was gasping from pain drastically changed into a wicked smile. Gerdaf leaped up.

It would be impossible for him to escape with the EX Drake that was almost seventy percent destroyed, but even so Lux was going to chase after him. It was at that time, a chill ran through his back.

"——"

His hand that was going to move Bahamut to fly to the sky stopped moving just barely.

It was because the movement of Gerdaf who seemed to receive instruction through Dragon Voice was slightly unnatural.

(Why is his leaping trajectory to above? If he is going to escape, normally he should leap backward——)

"Lux! Watch out!"

Celis who was being held by the armored arm yelled, at the same time Lux leaped right to the side from his spot.

A second later, the space before his eyes was painted out with extremely large flash.

"Ah....."

Gerdaf who leaped at slight distance away was directly showered by the cannon attack.

The overwhelming impact and torrent of flash swallowed him, and like that he exploded along with his Drag-Ride——annihilated into nothing.

".....-!?"

Lux quickly turned toward the direction where the cannon attack came from and took his stance.

Inside the night scenery that was illuminated by the moon, outside the Academy's ground——above a slightly elevated open space, a bizarre Drag-Ride was standing.

From the long distance it looked like the size of a speck, but compared to the surrounding building, it could be seen that the armor and the Cannon armament were unusually huge.

Most likely the Cannon possessed equal or superior destructive power than the special armament Seven Heads possessed by Lisha's Tiamat.

The face of the pilot was of course couldn't be seen.

That person was merely standing with the moon's radiance behind them.

"Is that, Rosa Granhide.....?"

That Drag-Knight made Gerda leap up for luring Lux to get in the air, so they could get rid of the two of them altogether.

That was the only thing that came to mind, but there was something strange.

That Drag-Ride had a completely different armor shape compared to the Gorynych that Lux and Celis fought before.

This wasn't at the level of special armaments combined into one, the Drag-Ride's very size itself was different. He could perceive that even from this distance.

Tartaros Frame—the Divine Raiment to remodel one's own Drag-Ride and making it taking new form right on the spot.

Perhaps, this was a power that wasn't revealed at all at the skill exhibition battle some time ago—.

"What in the world, is that—"

When Noct who was using Drake's camouflage to perform monitoring of the battle situation and information transmission showed up, her voice was quivering in wonder.

Celis was relieved that Noct was safe, at the same time she immediately gave instruction.

"Noct, can you investigate the Drag-Ride that launched the cannon attack just now?"

"No. It's outside the range of my detector. Besides—it already escaped."

It was just as Noct said, the Drag-Knight who was like a demon just now had immediately left the open space and vanished from the sight of Lux and others.

"Is that so. —Yes. We here are also safe. Lux-san and Celis-san has succeeded in safely repelling the Sacred Eclipse."

The other Triad members who were working in removing the Chaff Slime that was covering the hangar seemed to be contacting Noct. Noct raised her face.

"Thank you for the hard work. The Abysses that were advancing to Cross Field has also been annihilated. For the time being we can feel relieved with this."

It seemed Singlen lured the majority of Abysses that were attacking Cross Field, during that time the hangar that was sealed by Dragon Marauder's scheme was liberated, then the surviving Abysses were moped up immediately.

A loud sound came from behind as though to support Noct's words.

"Oooi Lux! Are you safe—?"

Lisha who was flying in Tiamat at the forefront called out, while the figures of Krulcifer, Philuffy, and the Triad could be seen behind her.

The moment Celis saw their figures, she coughed once before jumping down from Lux's arm in hurry.

"That, entrusting my weakness to you and displaying it to everyone are different matter altogether."

Her cheeks slightly reddened and she made a firm expression.

Even though currently she should be so tired that she would want to flop down, she tried to show a splendid appearance as the captain of Syvalles.

As expected, it seemed she had no intention to speak out complaint so easily.

It was really like her to pretend to be tough like this, at the same time he thought that such her was adorable.

"Then, please tell me secretly when senpai want to collapse. At that time I will support you no matter when——"

"——I'll permit that. Perhaps I will presume upon your kindness sometimes, but please keep it a secret from everyone, Lux."

Like that Celis returned a smile to Lux, and he also nodded back.

Trying to depend on a partner wasn't pampering oneself, it meant being able to accept one's own weakness.

The day of revolution five years ago.

That time when Fugil betrayed him, he lost an answer. Celis taught back that answer to him.

Lux thought that she was reliable, and she was someone that was worthy of respect.

At the same time, his bond with this senior who was similar with him at some respect now was something that he cherished from his heart.

"Yes. From here on, please take care of me too so that I won't make a mistake."

Lux showed a smile and told her his honest feeling like that.

—

And then the battle this evening—the contact with Sacred Eclipse that would ruin this world came to an end for the moment with this.

Epilogue – Honest Feeling

Part 1

The threat of human shaped Ragnarok, Sacred Eclipse that appeared at the same time with the surprise attack of Dragon Marauder had left.

But the next day, it seemed there was a talk from the Lord's first imperial princess Listelka that it was nothing more than a temporary victory.

To the end, it was Avalon that made Sacred Eclipse appeared.

When that human shaped Ragnarok was killed, it would resurrect along with the time's passing, and before long the period until its revival would speed up.

The time frame of the world's destruction of half a year later was a result from the calculation which took that fact into account.

This was a brief moment of peace.

Even so there was no doubt that they had averted the danger.

The tidying up of the campus festival would be started the next day, at the same time most of the Seven Dragon Paladins and leaders' representatives gathered in the Cross Field returned back to their country.

Singlen who saved Cross Field from the threat of Abyss with his overwhelming power was evaluated highly by the alliance, next the achievement of Lux and Celis who had repelled Sacred Eclipse for the moment was also recognized.

The former prisoner of Heiburg. The Hunting Punishment Gerdaf, one of the Servants, the assassination corps with members who possessed high ability and yet were imprisoned because of their crime. He was annihilated because of the cannon attack of a mysterious Drag-Knight.

Consequently the case where Celis and Lux fell into a trap couldn't be substantiated, the situation became one where the investigation right of Babel for a month was kept in Heiburg's grasp where refusal wasn't permitted.

In addition, it came to light that the Dragon Marauder took advantage of the chaos from Sacred Eclipse's appearance and invaded the Academy's underground jail, liberating the division commander Dracken, and recovered back the Divine Drag-Ride Asp.

Although it was something that couldn't be helped because they took the advantage of the gap created when the new kingdom military intercepted Sacred Eclipse, it was still a painful affair.

It seemed that from here on a countermeasure would be prepared to further strengthen the security of Drag-Ride hangar.

And then—a new objective was created in the world.

In order to stop the world's destruction by Sacred Eclipse based on the oracle that was told by the ancient era imperial family, the Lord, the countries would aim at Avalon, the land of paradise where the knowledge and technology of the past were sleeping.

For that, with the exception of the Ark and the Gigas, the liberation of the remaining Ruins was indispensable.

In order to place the crystals called Grand Force at the deepest part of each Ruin, defeating the five Ragnarok that were holding the Grand Forces was a matter of the highest priority.

At the same time there were three issues that had to be solved at the same time.

First, was the extermination of Dragon Marauder—the mercenary organization of Drag-Knight that was hostile to the countries in the Ruins' capture.

Second, was the finding of the seventh Ruin, Moon which whereabouts became unknown since several months ago.

Third, the suppression of 'traitor' that was assumed to be somewhere amidst this world alliance.

At any rate, owing to Listelka who proclaimed that the country that raised achievements for the sake of reaching Avalon would be granted with more reward, each country would unintentionally compete with each other for accomplishments.

When leaving from the Academy, Singlen called out to Lux. Even now his words were remaining in Lux's ear.

"It seems that the kings of the countries are relieved that the Lords are cooperative. —Hey chore prince, don't you think that there is a limit even in being foolish?"

"What could you possibly mean?"

In respond to Lux's utterance, Singlen kept pasting the fearless grin on his face and answered.

"Stop playing dumb. You too should have gotten at least an inkling of those guys' aim. If at first the Lords showed a hostile stance, the whole world will turn into their enemy. —But, those guys cleverly used their fortune and technological strength as bait and made an arrangement where we competed among ourselves."

"....."

"Well fine. Right now it can still hardly be said those guys are double-crossing us. More importantly I know well about your brother. If you will submit to me, I'm going to teach you about him right away. I'll also help you out. That's including the matter of Ruin investigation right that is taken by Heiburg."

—Lux didn't respond to that invitation.

Singlen's words were also more or less logical.

But, as expected he couldn't let his guard down against this man. Lux's instinct was telling him that.

Lux and Celis were made to take holiday for two days to heal their wound and fatigue from the battle, during that time the tidying up of campus festival was over.

It was Lux's first campus festival that was really full of happening.

Lux was feeling a tinge of loneliness while together with Lisha and others, they went to plead at Relie in panic, asking whether Celis's request to resign as Seven Dragon Paladin's aide could be retracted.

Naturally, they were resolved that their request might be denied.

"Aa, that matter? Yes, I'm still properly holding on to it without presenting it to the capital you know? I was only asked to keep it in my care after all."

Like that, they were responded with Relie's indifferent smile.

"When Lux-kun and other know about it, they will come to me and ask to retract it with all their might anyway right? It will be troublesome at that time if the withdrawal request has been formally processed then."

As expected from Relie. Lux who knew her since the past could only feel astounded by her action.

"Headmaster is really impossible. But, that helped me out."

Celis stroked her chest in relieve and she turned around to face the Syvalles members.

"My gratitude for everyone who came together with me. In order to be of assistance to the new kingdom—to Lux as an aide, I wish to do everything in my power from here on too."

"Haa, humbling yourself like that again. Geez, Celis-senpai."

"Yes. But, really this is a good thing."

Seeing Celis's smile, Tillfur and Noct of the Triad each replied so.

Everyone there including Lux made a relieved expression. And then Sharis suddenly smiled mischievously and tapped Celis's back lightly.

"I see, so Celis is thankful to us. As a splendid senior, you will fulfill your promise from here on— isn't that right?"

"I, I intend to do so.....but, what is it?"

Celis made a bewildered expression at Sharis's suspicious insinuation.

"Everyone, you heard that right? Then just as she proclaimed, how about we have her fulfilling the promise with Lux-kun? Without that, our festival won't end, isn't that right?"

"Eh.....?"

Lux and Celis tilted their head at the same time, then the other Syvalles members were also flabbergasted for a moment.

But, some soon noticed and they snapped their eyes wide open.

"Wa, wait a second!? It's already invalid after this long right!? Even if they don't intentionally redo it——"

"It's true. The campus festival is over already, I think it's not something they need to force themselves to do."

"Be, besides right now, even if they don't do it in this kind of place——"

Lisha, Krulcifer, and also Airi altogether tried to stop it.

Then, Philuffy spoke the answer with her expression still absentmindedly blank like usual.

"I also want to do it, a 'chuu'^{kiss} with Lu-chan."

".....-!?"

With that word, everyone there recalled it.

At the event of campus festival, the punishment game from the costume tournament.

Celis was unable to kiss Lux and ran away that time.

"It seem the misunderstanding between the two has also been cleared away, so do it without reservation. Now, all of us here will be the witness."

"Yes. It's a punishment game so it can't be helped. I only know about kiss from book, so my heart too is beating unusually fast."

"Uaa. Bu, but still. As expected shouldn't this get stopped!? The time has already passed somewhat anyway——"

The festival lover Tillfur was unusually trying to stop the kiss between Lux and Celis, but,

"Oh, is that fine? If there is similar situation in the future, won't this be disadvantage for Tillfur too if at this time this promise is disregarded?"

"Uuu, I, I got it! And so, do it resolutely you two!"

Admonished like that by Sharis, even the outsider Tillfur willfully told the two to resolve themselves.

"I, I understand. Then, that's—is it, okay? Lux....."

Suddenly when Lux turned his gaze forward, he saw Celis there whose expression was resolved although she was averting her gaze shyly.

(I, it's a punishment game, it can't be helped now that it reached this point, isn't it?)

".....E, excuse me!"

Lux suppressed the pounding of his heart while closing his eyes with slight nervousness.

Regarding the punishment game, the spot of the kiss shouldn't matter.

This was Celis who had serious personality and never had relationship with man, so surely she would kiss at the cheek or forehead.

Right after Lux stood ready for that possibility, his body was violently tilted.

"—Eh?"

Before lips touched his face, he was pushed down by Celis.

The moment Lux opened his eyes in surprise, the inside of his head became pure white.

Right after a feverish sigh touched him—her lustrous and charming lips were pressed on Lux's mouth.

It was a sensation that was sensual with its softness, just feeling it made him felt like he would be melting.

He was pushed down on the sofa inside the headmaster office with Celis in the posture of covering his body from above. Like that Lux was receiving her kiss.

"Nnh, uu....."

One of her hands was grasping Lux's hand with her fingers entwining around his. The voluptuous twin hills that Celis had were pressed on Lux's chest.



The overwhelming volume and the elasticity inside that weak and soft texture.

Her lips, her entwining fingers, her breasts pressing on him.

Everything became intoxicating sweet stimulation that tickled Lux's sexual desire.

(What's, this..... My head, is getting strange—)

In contrast with Lux who turned stiff and couldn't move, Celis gently sucked on Lux's lips with an expression that looked to be in raptures somewhere.

That caress which was by no means intense or strong, but was only filled with affection was melting Lux's reasoning into a muddled mess.

Now that Lux's reluctance toward another person's good will had gone, he was receiving this stimulation far more than everything before.

"Pu, haa.....!"

Celis who was doing it for ten-odd seconds finally released Lux.

She wiped her lips that were moist with saliva while breathing roughly 'haa haa'.

"Thi, this is strange! It's just too amazing. So this is—a true kiss? Thi, this kind of thing is not permitted. It's too lewd!"

The moment Celis murmured that with a half dumbfounded expression, the time of the surrounding that was completely paused started to move.

"THAT'S OUR LINEEE—————!?"

Starting from Lisha and Tillfur who yelled like that, all the members of Syvalles also gave their own retort.

"Wh, who told you to go that far, Celis? E, even for me that was a bit, too stimulating——"

Sharis also muttered in confusion, while Krulcifer also sending Celis an amazed gaze.

"It looks like, I'm underestimating you too much....."

"Nii-san, get a hold of yourself!"

On the other hand, Airi was shaking Lux who was staring at the ceiling with a dazed look. Beside them Lisha was standing flat-footed looking like her soul was coming out from her mouth.

"Lux is, my, knight though....."

"Will he wake up if he is given 'chuu' once more?"

"—Wait, what are you planning to do in the middle of this confusion, this airhead girl!"

Lisha came back to her senses after hearing Philuffy muttering with a serious face and stopped her.

"E, everyone, why are you all so flustered like that!? I, I am just, following the way of kissing that Yoruka taught me yesterday—"

".....!?"

When the red faced Celis yelled that with a flustered tone, everyone's gaze was focused at the black clothed girl standing at the corner of the room.

".....My? What could be the matter everyone? It's a matter of kissing with Aruji-sama, so of course, as the foreplay for the act after that, I imparted the knowledge that I know to her—"

The moment Yoruka said that with her expression flashing into a bright smile, everyone's thinking united into one.

After a short pause, Lisha stepped forward as though to represent that feeling.

—

"SO – IT'S – YO – UR – FA – ULT – HUH—————!"

—

The soulful angry yell of Lisha echoed inside the school building.

The fun campus festival was over.

Inside that commotion that blew away that loneliness, Lux was starting to build a new relationship with the girls.

—

Part 2

"Haa..... Somehow it became an amazing thing huh."

After everything calmed down, Lux was descending the stair that was going underwear—to the depth of the library by himself.

It was the hidden room that wasn't opened for the students.

Lux stepped inside the hall made from stone where countless utensils and bookshelves were lined up.

After the punishment game with Celis was over, everyone breakup and left the headmaster room. When Lux was going to leave too, Relie tapped his shoulder and told him about a certain request.

It was a request that she wanted him to listen to a talk from a certain girl.

No, strictly speaking it seemed that the person wasn't in the age that could be called as girl though.....

"—I longed for your arrival you know, my sweetheart candidate. It looks like you have become a bit more handsome after just overcoming another trial isn't it?"

The one sitting on the chair that Relie previously used before was a girl with particular outfit and appearances.

She wore a wicked smile that could also be called as somewhat vulgar. The captain of Seven Dragon Paladins, Magialca Zen Vanfrick.

He had made prediction to some degree from Relie's request, but as expected this was still an unexpected call.

But, Lux didn't show his discomposure at all and responded to her question with a calm wry smile.

"Thank you very much. But, we were able to repel Sacred Eclipse this time was thanks to Celis-senpai, I was only getting helped by everyone in the Academy."

Lux ignored the part 'sweetheart candidate' that Magialca said while replying.

"That's what you call being humble. Rather than you accomplishing something by yourself, you are making a lot of company who wish to help you, that's where your talent originally lies on. I see, as expected you are a suitable man for me to entrust my request to."

"A request, from Captain Magialca.....?"

In respond to Lux's mutter, Magialca let out a breath and showed a shadowed smile that was filled with implication.

"You, recently you are attracting the eyes of various bunch aren't you? Whether it's that shitty fiend vice captain Singlen, or that Steel Witch Rosa Granhide. And then I heard you also have ties with that knight who guarded the Lords personally, Fugil Arcadia."

"....."

The moment Lux heard that name mentioned, somehow he got a hunch of what Magialca would say.

Lux had no intention to change his expression, but Magialca smiled, as though he had perceived the slight subtlety of his complexion.

"Don't be that worried. I don't intend to take and eat you here. But well, that bunch called the Lord is a more troublesome opponent than I thought."

".....What do you mean?"

"It's about the timing when they played the 'trump card' of that so called Sacred Eclipse which you guys destroyed."

Magialca showed a fearless smile and switched the crossing of her legs.

"The demon that lured and summoned a lot of Abysses, furthermore it also let out a signal that contained the risk of calling even the nearby Ragnarok. In addition, if we fully trust the story of those Lords, you've heard that the thing will resurrect many times through the passing of time haven't you?"

"_____"

Sacred Eclipse——would resurrect even if it was defeated.

As long as the system that produced it wasn't destroyed, it couldn't be stopped.

Thus there was a necessity to go to Avalon, the place that was said to control that mechanism.

This matched with the information that he found with Krulcifer at the Ruin Hall of Ymir Theocracy.

This wasn't the Lords' lie——, was how it should be.

"There is half a year remaining until the world's destruction. The calamity that destroy the world, Sacred Eclipse. This information sounded like nothing more than nonsense when that bunch said it, but with the incident the other day it's suddenly possess authenticity. It appeared right after the summit, as though it has been planned."

"So you mean that it's too contrived? That the Lords attain even the mean to control Sacred Eclipse."

Lux immediately replied like that, but Magialca quietly shook her head.

"It might be, but my prediction is a bit different. That bunch has a grasp of the general action the Sacred Eclipse is taking, but they cannot go as far as freely controlling it—I think it's something like that. If that bunch can actually control it, it won't be strange even if we got screwed more ingeniously and then annihilated, right?"

"....."

Lux also thought that she had a point there.

Just merely because they weren't lying at this present stage, didn't mean that the Lords could be completely trusted.

"Well, keeping that in mind, there is only half a year until the world's destruction. As the top of the world who is entrusted with the Seven Dragon Paladins, I have the duty to protect my own assets—I mean, the world's peace."

After speaking out such just cause that was somewhat transparent, Magialca stood up and puffed out her chest.

—

"Therefore, the Seven Dragon Paladin of New Kingdom Atismata, Lux Arcadia. I will bequeath you with a special mission from the captain. Find the traitor that exist among our world alliance—and erase them! I already have a prospect where they might appear."

—

Magialca flapped her red coat and announced loudly.

"——"

Lux felt even more omen of disturbance from the ruler's smile that was like an abyss.

Afterword

Hello.

This is Akatsuki Senri who wants to rest in unpopulated island for about a month.

A year has already passed since I started thinking such thing.

Rather I'm in a situation where I'm not even really able to take time to go to hospital.

But Middle Age fantasy is quite a harsh world after all.

Surely this is nothing at all compared to Lux-kun and others (deranged).

The anime, it finally started.

I said started, but at present when I'm writing this afterword, even I haven't seen the actual show, so I'm looking forward how it will turn out.

I was also asked to observe the dubbing work for a bit, but the moment when voice is breathed into the character was interesting in a mysterious feeling.

While thinking so, it felt embarrassing when the line that I wrote was read out loud, at the site I was frequently thinking 「UOaaa!」 inside my heart while blocking my ears (lol).

Now then, next time the ninth volume will be something like short stories collection + α.

It will be Lux-kun and the heroines who are worn out in various things from doing only fighting and intrigue.

It will make me happy if you all can enjoy the silly ordinary days with the girls and the story that is starting to move.

I plan to properly set up Philuffy's second turn, so please look forward to it at that time.

Well then, moving to the thanks.

Kasuga Ayumu-sama who is kindly taking charge of the novel illustration.

Thank you very much for drawing the wonderful color illustration that is quite risqué this time. I was extremely enjoying from the rough design until it was colored.

Of course, I'm referring to the color illustration of the battle scene.

.....Well then, best regards for Bahamut along with the anime from here on!

A certain day at December 2015 Akatsuki Senri